THE

SOUTH INDIAN TEACHER

Vol. V. 15th July 1932 No. 7

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

BY

A Member of the Indian Educational Service.

I must begin with a personal confession. After 18 years' service in the Educational Department of the Madras Presidency, including 4 years' service as an Inspector of Schools, I have never been able to discover the philosophy or theory underlying secondary schools for boys in this part of the world. Is there one? Are our secondary schools the concrete embodiment of one or more educational ideals or principles, which are capable of being formulated, expounded and defended? If so, why is there so much dissatisfaction with secondary schools? Why is there so much random, haphazard and arbitrary criticism of mere details of curricula, methods and examinations, and why is this criticism never answered by showing that the object of the critic's dislike is in accord with the accepted principles of secondary education? The logical basis of our present system of secondary education is not, of course, my subject. But I cannot picture to myself the ideally right place of English in the secondary school, unless I know what the South Indian ideal of a secondary school is. I must know what, in the view of those responsible for the shaping of educational policy, the function of a secondary school in the body politic is. The necessity for at least a working definition of secondary education will appear in the course of our discussion.

Our subject is "The Teaching of English in Secondary schools". Our problem is, what should be the place of English in our secondary schools, and how can English be made to fulfil its proper function? Let us symbolise the divisions of the subject by the useful little words, **who? whom? what? why?** and **how?**

'Who' is of course, the teacher of English. With him I will not deal explicitly. What I have to say about his qualities and work will be said incidentally and mostly by implication in connection with the other factors of the problem.

'Whom' is the pupil—the most important of all the factors. It is beyond the wit of man to devise a system of instruction in English which will equally and simultaneously serve the needs of all sorts and conditions of pupils. Every type of school organised on a material or quasi-national scale

must provide for diversities of temperament and ability.

A fairly wide range of aptitudes will always be found under one school roof. But some degree of homogeneity among the pupils of a school is absolutely necessary if the school is to serve a definite and distinctive purpose. There must be a clearly recognizable unity in the multiplicity. Here we are back at the question with which we started: what is a secondary school and what does it try to do?

If the secondary school in South India is the analogue of the secondary school or its equivalent in Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and other educationally advanced countries, excluding America, the answer is easy. A secondary school is one in which secondary education is given, and secondary education is the best and most advanced education which can be given between the ages of 6 and 17 (say) to the best minds of the community. "The best mind" is an inexpugnable element in this conception of secondary education. Of course, this working definition itself needs defining, and the work of defining its terms bristles with difficulties. It is not necessary for my purpose to define further. I have done all I wanted to do, namely, to give a rough and approximate description of the pupil whose needs and interests I have to consider in discussing the place and purpose of English in his education. An Indian secondary school pupil should possess abilities and capacities on a par with those which differentiate the "Secondary" from the "elementary" and "higher elementary" pupil in all other *important* countries except America. It appears to me that South India, having failed to develop a system of "elementary" education worthy of the name, has tended to obliterate the distinction between the real "secondary" pupil and the pupil who is unequal to and unfitted for the advanced work of the secondary school. Surely this is the real explanation of the chronic and current complaint of lax promotions, overloaded curricula and failures in examinations—all different colours of the same spectrum. Whether you call it secondary or by any other name, there must in the nature of things be an education suitable for the mentally gifted members of the community, the intellectual *elite*, "Natures' Aristocracy" (which of course, has no necessary connection with the aristocracy by birth and wealth) different from that suitable for the less gifted. Democratic America alone among great nations has ignored this truth; but that it is a truth is, I think being slowly borne in upon her: witness the growth in recent years of the junior high school. If India under the new political regime chooses the equalitarian example of her polar antithesis, America, the results will of a surety be dire. A better example to follow is that of Republican Germany, where in theory at least, money cannot buy nor social position claim admission to the Gymnasium: to that, a high degree of merit and promise is the sole passport.

I know well the difficulties in the way of giving effect to such a policy in South India. The 'best minds' do not always wear their credentials on their forehead, and fond parents are as erratic in casting their children's educational horoscope as in calculating their date of birth. I do not wish to lay pedantic stress on the conception of the secondary school as the training ground of the 'best minds'. Such a conception bears no doubt the same relation to the actual secondary school that a diagram of the solar system bears to the facts of interstellar space; the asteroids of secondary education not to mention the meteorites, are omitted. All I suggest is that teachers, and especially Headmasters, should throw all the weight of their influence on the side of high standards and correct classification. I believe that 'the best minds' among the rising generation of South India are equal to the best minds of the same generation in any

quarter of the globe, and I am equally certain that in no quarter of the globe are the best minds more handicapped than in South India by the incubus of the unfit.

The 'what' and 'why' of our subject are, of course, mutually involved, and it is better to discuss them together. What are we to teach under the name of 'English' in our secondary schools? and what is our aim in teaching it? The education imparted in the secondary school is to be "the best and most advanced possible," and by 'best' I mean the education most suited to the present needs—political, social, economic and cultural—and the future requirements of the country. The detailed characteristics of such an education provide matter for volumes. The present discussion envisages only a single need—the need in all walks of life for men of trained intelligence, who have been taught to observe, imagine, and reflect, to think and to arrive at correct conclusions, men possessed of a true sense of value, with the desire and ability to give effect to their knowledge and belief. The main function of a secondary school is to do what a school can do to render such men possible. A secondary education is not, except incidentally, vocational in the narrow technical sense, but it should be intensely and incessantly practical in the sense of being in close and constant touch with life and the real world. Provided this condition is fulfilled, each of the subjects of the present curriculum is indispensable, adding, as it does, something to the pupil: mental and moral equipment that no other subject supplies.

English used to be, still in too many cases is, the sun of the secondary school system. It should be only a planet. The whole system is and will remain out of relation to reality as long as this Ptolemaic error continues. The true centre of the system is the mother-tongue. The substitution of the mother-tongue for English as the centre of the secondary school curriculum is the Copernican revolution of South Indian education. I speak as an enthusiast for English. I am not enough of an astronomer to say what the effect on the planetary system would be of the sudden disappearance of Jupiter, but I am sure that the sudden disappearance of English would dissolve the secondary school system, as we know it, in South India. That system came with English, and, unless the place of English is taken by some language corresponding to English in richness and universality, it will go with English.

I am not surprised that many Headmasters hesitate to adopt the mother-tongué as the medium of instruction in the higher forms. It is not altogether an idle fear that the progressive weakening of the force which originated and still actuates secondary education may ultimately destroy the motive power of the system—that 1935 may undo the work of 1835. The danger can only be averted by giving the mother-tongue exactly the same prominence and attention that English gets in England, and using English as a source of knowledge and power for the modernization and invigoration of the mother-tongue.

The all-importance of the role of language in mental development is a common place of modern educational theory. The report of the Newbolt Committee (1919-1921) on "The Teaching of English in England" (page 20) states the view with force and precision. "What a man cannot clearly state he does not perfectly know, and, conversely, the inability to put his thought into words sets a boundary to his thought. Impression may anticipate words, but unless expression seizes and recreates them they soon fade away, or remain but vague and indefinite to the mind which received them and incommunicable to others. 'A haziness of intellectual vision', said Cardinal Newmann, 'is the malady—of all who have not had a really good education'. It is a common experience that to find fit language for

our impressions not only renders them clear and definite to ourselves and to others, but in the process leads to deeper insight and fresh discoveries, at once explaining and extending our knowledge". A thorough mastery of the mother-tongue as a vehicle of modern thought and experience is clearly a *sine qua non* of a true and fruitful education. The full implications of this truth are outside the scope of the present discussion. Its acceptance involves a complete revolution in the conception of the curriculum, the correlation of subjects, the spirit and method of teaching, and, above all, in the mental outlook and equipment of the teacher of the mother-tongue. The traditional 'Pundit' theory and practice shall be scrapped *in toto*, in so far as they are out of harmony with the modern outlook on the teaching of the mother-tongue. That outlook is nowhere more lucidly and fully exhibited than in the Newbolt report above referred to. It is the spirit of this report that should be incorporated in the re-organised aims and methods of vernacular studies in South Indian secondary schools.

Now, if it is true,—and there is every reason to believe that it is true—that at least some South Indian vernaculars are not at present instruments of precision for the expression of modern thought and experience, and if it is not denied that the vernacular literatures are not worthy expressions of modern life, achievements, ideals and aspirations, it follows that the main aim of the teaching of English should be able to supply those defects in South Indian Education. If the aim of education is proficiency in living, and if books are "the instruments through which we hear the views of those who have known life better than ourselves "and if by "life" and "living" we mean life in accordance with modern standards and conditions and opportunities, then the ability to read and assimilate modern English books is the indispensable complement of the mastery of the mother-tongue in South Indian secondary education. To impart this ability is the fundamental aim of the English course. The narrowly utilitarian aim of teaching pupils to speak and write English for the purpose of law-courts, Government and business officers, newspaper staffs and so on is a subsidiary aim, which may best be attained by pursuing the larger and more philosophic purpose.

We can now come to closer grips with the question of the actual content of the English course. There are only three main things that we can teach under the head of 'English'—to speak and understand oral English, to read English and to write it. Dr. West in "Bilingualism" vehemently desires that it is neither possible nor desirable, much less necessary, to teach any considerable proportion of the pupils in secondary schools in Bengal to speak or write English. His conclusions refer to Bengal, but his arguments, if valid, apply equally to Madras. Those pupils who as future lawyers, Government servants and so on, must learn to speak and write English, constitute according to Dr. West, only a small minority of the secondary school population. The needs of such pupils can, he says, be met by an optional course in English. For the great majority of the pupils the only need is to learn to *read* English. I have never seen any estimate of the number of persons in this Presidency who need for the purposes of their daily life to be proficient in the speaking and writing of English. If it is a fact that only a minority of our secondary school pupils will ever habitually speak and write English in later life, it is *prima facie* clear that learning to speak and write English cannot be the chief or even the major aim of the course. Dr. West has, I think, by his arguments reinforced the conclusion that the chief aim of the course is to teach pupils to read English. But, in excluding speaking and writing from the course, I think he has underesti-

mated the importance of those acquisitions as an aid to the complete understanding and critical appreciation of Modern English literature. Reading is a much more passive exercise than composition, and reading alone will not waken the mind to a vital grasp of the true meaning and value of words and their combination in sentences. 'Writing makes an exact man'. The practice of composition not only fixes the vocabulary and syntax in the mind, but stimulates it to attentive reading. It is possible to learn to write English without speaking it, but the English so written tends to be bookish, artificial and stilted. One of the advantages looked for from the English course is the appreciation of the beauty of a natural, easy and unaffected style, and the readiest, if not the only way, of acquiring this taste is to learn to speak simple English.

This, then, is the main aim of the course, to impart the power to appreciate and assimilate not only the matter but the form of good, simple, modern English prose, and as a means to this end (as well as for utilitarian purposes) to train the pupil to speak simple and fundamental English correctly and without effort, and to write simple English on familiar subject-matter with special attention to clearness and sequence of thought and right choice of words.

How is this programme to be carried out? By attention to two principles, which being truisms can be stated impressively only in the form of paradoxes. The first paradox is that the English course depends for its successful accomplishment on the teaching in classes in which not a word of English is spoken. The pupil is an indivisible unit, and brings with him into the English class the benefit or the harm which he has received in other classes. The aim of the English course cannot be fulfilled unless the teachers of other subjects assist in the inculcation of good habits of work, in "the awakening of interests which will give meaning and worth to life and will lead to a desire for first-hand information and investigation", and in the development of the pupil's intelligence and of those general mental abilities which are the basis of all intellectual work whatsoever. A teacher (and this includes, of course, the English teacher) who does anything less than this is traitor to his colleagues. In particular, all teachers of non-language subjects, including the Physical and Manual instructors should remember that they are teachers of the mother-tongue. A not unimportant part of their work is to inculcate correct speech. The relation between the teachers of the mother-tongue and of English must be peculiarly intimate. It is no exaggeration to say that half the work that is now imposed on and often left undone by the English teacher should be done in the vernacular class. Good elocution, ready speech, accurate and fitting expression, both oral and written, the "ability to derive from books a full measure of what they have to give of information and enjoyment", and above all, clear thinking—all this is the business of the teacher of the mother-tongue more than any one else. All the fundamental distinctions of grammar and "rhetoric" required for the purposes of reading and composition by the teacher of English should reach the pupil by a path paved by the teacher of the mother-tongue. The failure of the teaching of the mother-tongue in the past is the measure of the failure in the teaching of English. Correlation is the key to success in future.

The second paradox is that the teacher of English, as soon as he enters his classroom, should forget that he is a teacher of English. The paradox holds good of all teachers; in preparing the lesson they are specialists, in teaching it they are educators; at their study table they are dealing with their subject, in the classroom they are dealing with their pupils. The specific application of this principle to the teacher of English is this: his main business is not to teach English,

but to teach his pupils to teach themselves English. The direct method is the method of picking up correct English directly from the lips of a speaker and directly from the pages of the book. Yet many of us know what it is to give a Sixth form question paper couched in faultless English, and to find that our pupils in employing the very phraseology of the question have corrupted it. Give a Sixth form a question-paper containing unfamiliar proper names, and see if 50 per cent of them do not misspell the names, perhaps in three different ways on the same page. Pupils taught for 8 years according to the so-called direct method have not yet acquired the first idea of how to learn English. Only drastic and revolutionary methods will cure the evil. Delete the words "conversation" and "oral composition" from the time-table, and substitute "Ear-training and speech training through the medium of English." Delete 'Reading' from the time-table and substitute 'eye-training and speech-training' through the medium of English. For 'Spelling' read 'Exercises in the observation of Printed English'. The two expressions most constantly on the lips of the teacher should be 'Listen to me' and 'Look at the book'. The training of the two most important senses, the development of powers of attention into powers of concentration, the training of the memory for English words, their sounds, shapes and meanings, and for English sentences, the inculcation of habits of accuracy—these are the tasks of the English teacher. Accuracy and thoroughness are his watchwords. Constant repetition of questions and answers by the class in chorus is the distinguishing feature of his method. For the first two or three years at least the English class should be as vocal as a singing class, though the volume of sound should be more restrained! The specific purpose in the early stages is to make responses to questions automatically correct, the question being just as important as the answer. A pre-condition of success at all stages is the analysis of fundamental English into its component forms, and the teaching of these systematically and thoroughly. The committing to memory of types of sentences, accompanied by exercises on them, forms an important part of the work in every class. Unfortunately, no series of text-books yet exists in which this analysis of the language is carried out successfully, but this merely means that the teaching of English in India is still in its infancy.

All the English work should be subordinated to the task of teaching the pupil to 'read' English in the full educational sense of the term 'read'. Most of the fundamental work is done by the teacher of the mother-tongue. In the vernacular class the boy's eyes are opened to the meaning of good expression, the qualities of a good story, or a good description, the requirements of a good report or account of something. Texts should be taught as models of good story-telling, description or "Exposition". With regard to subject-matter, I have no time to say more than that it should be interesting. The nature and amount of the reading should be made the subject of experiment over a series of years.

The proper organisation of the course still awaits the introduction of true scientific method into the classroom.

The place of the mother-tongue in the teaching of English should present no difficulty to an intelligent teacher. Use it freely in explanation and in the teaching of grammar and the qualities of 'Style'. Remember only that a pupil can learn to understand spoken English only by learning it, to speak it only by speaking it and so on. Not more than one-tenth of a lesson (other than a lesson on the 'technical' aspects of the language) should be taken up with explanation in the mother-tongue. The object of explanation is to make the pupil *see* the picture called up by the word: it is largely a

training in imagination. "He paddled the boat across the river". "The ducks paddled in the water". Different images, different meanings. 'Meaning' means 'meaning in a given context' the context is just as important as the word. 'Dramatisation' by means of gestures and actions is of supreme importance in the explanation of verbs, prepositions, and many descriptive adjectives and adverbs: nouns and adjectives are more characteristically explained by means of objects and pictures, including black-board sketches. Prepositions particularly should be 'dramatized', especially the spatial ones. "He will arrive wtihin a week". These expressions could not be confused, as they often are if the spatial images suggested by them had been visually evoked and emphasised in the course of the teaching.

I have space for only a single suggestion as to the teaching of composition. 'Writing maketh an exact man'. The aim of the composition course throughout the school should be to ensure accuracy and clearness of thought and expression. The pupil should be taught to define the boundaries of a subject, to give unity to it, to know when to begin and end; to be accurate in the use of words, forms and constructions. A sixth form composition should be a record of clear impressions, of exact observation and thought. Compositions displaying the qualities of unity and coherence can only be obtained as a result of a continuous and co-operative training to which all subjects make their contribution. The incoherent and chaotic stuff miscalled composition in the Sixth form to-day, is due to lack of mental training, for which all teachers—not merely the English teacher is responsible.

Very little 'original' composition in English should be attempted except by the most advanced boys. Powers of 'invention' as the old rhetoricians called *it*, vary markedly in different individuals, and the 'inventive' pupil may be allowed to indulge his best, if he is already 'an exact man'. For the average Sixth form boy most composition should be free reproduction of subject-matter read or talked about, or 'chained' in one way or another. No free reproduction should be done before the Third form at the earliest The slipshod, inaccurate, incorrect English of many graduates is due to their having embarked on free composition in English long before they were ready for it. 'Language exercises' should be distinguished from 'composition' and should predominate in the composition until at least the Fourth form. Even in the three higher forms numerous exercises should be done in addition to the matter. At all stages correctness of form and truth of matter should be insisted on. Only if these are found as qualities in the pupil's own composition is there reason to believe that he has properly understood, assimilated and made his own the English books which are his models. English composition should be viewed as a test of understanding and appreciation of English literature rather than as an end in itself.

I believe it is on some such lines as these that the English course should be conducted in the South Indian Secondary schools of the immediate future. Only, if it is conducted with such aims and in such a spirit will it produce results commensurate with needs of the community whose future so much depends on the efficiency of its secondary schools.

THE DALTON PLAN IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

BY

REV. W. M. RYBURN

One of the great advantages of the Dalton Plan is its elasticity. It may be easily modified to suit circumstances, whether those circumstances be the result of the subject itself or of limitation of staff or equipment. Those who are acquainted with the orthodox Dalton Plan will recognise that what I am describing in this article is a modification of the Dalton Plan. It is a modification however, which has been found to work very well and which conserves nearly all, if not all of the advantages of the Plan.

It is peculiarly important that some such system as the Dalton Plan should be used in the teaching of English. English looms so large on the pupils' horizon; so much of the pupils' efforts goes into the learning of English; so much of their time is spent in its study, that the method by which it is learnt must inevitably have a very great effect on the characters and method of the pupils. It is therefore most important that there should be as little as possible of anything in the nature of spoon-feeding in the teaching of English. If the spoon is used in the English room it will be difficult to train the pupil to use anything but the spoon in any other room Once he finds that in learning English he has but to open his mouth and let the food be crammed in, he will expect the same treatment in every other subject, and it will be very difficult to train him in habits of self-help and self-teaching.

At the same time it must be admitted English is not one of the easiest subjects to which can be adapted the Dalton Plan. There must be a great deal of oral work, and the Plan usually means more written work than oral. English, or any foreign language, is likely to show signs of unwanted originality if the pupil is left long to his own resources without the guiding hand of his teacher. Yet under the Dalton Plan pupils must be left to their own resources a good deal of the time. There is a great deal of correction work to be done if any such system as the Dalton Plan is used and how is the poor teacher, already overburdened with work, to cope with the extra work that this extra correction involves?

It must be admitted at once that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to work the Dalton Plan successfully with large classes. This of course, is no argument against the worth of the method. It is rather the reverse. The class teaching system, by enabling teaching work to be carired on, or, one should say, to appear to be carried on, with classes of forty or over, has done the greatest disservice to the cause of education. The Dalton Plan simply exposes the fallacy that we hug to ourselves, that we are "teaching" when we confront a class of forty or so. It would be very difficult to carry on the Dalton Plan with more than thirty pupils in a class. Even that number is on the large size. Twenty-five or twenty is nearer the mark. With this proviso, however, namely, that the size of the class should not be too great, it is possible to use the Dalton Plan in teaching English.

In the first place the subject may be divided into two parts. These parts, though separate, are, of course, not rigidly so and,

continually inter-weave with each other. The two sections into which the subject may be divided are firstly, what we may call grammar and composition and secondly the text or reader. A different method will be needed with each section. Let us take the text or reader first.

My experience has been that in this division of the subject it is impossible to use the regular Dalton method of dealing with the subject. However well the assignments be made out, it is very difficult for students to work through a reader and get out of it for themselves all that they ought to. For instance, they look a word up in the dictionary and find that it has two meanings. Often they have no means of knowing which of the two meanings is the right one. Usually they have no means of telling what the construction of the particular word is, what is its use with different prepositions. Then too, they lose the oral practice given by reading and by conversation and other oral work in class. At the same time something can be done.

The plan that I have adopted for this branch of the subject is a sort of compromise between the ordinary class teaching and the ordinary Dalton system. Assignments are prepared on the text or reader just as though the students were going to try to work through the reader by themselves. Meanings of difficult words are given, examples of useful constructions are given, questions are given the answering of which will help them to understand what they are reading; exercises of various kinds are given which are to be done; points of grammar noted where necessary. Generally the assignment is just what it is under the regular Dalton system, a help to study which will enable the student, with the help of his dictionary and his grammar and other books to study the book for himself.

The students then have these assignments on the text or reader. Each day a portion of the book is set which has to be prepared at home or during preparation time. The members of the class are supposed to come to class the next day having worked through, with the help of the assignment, the portion set. In class the teacher rapidly, by means of questions round the class, tests the preparation work and then goes through the passage set as though he were taking an ordinary lesson with the class. There is this vast difference however, that the class can take an intelligent interest in what is going on. They know what they found difficult in their preparation, and can get it set right. They also get put right any wrong meanings they may have occasionally got from the dictionary. The pupils have done a great part of the work themselves, and the teacher is left free to put the finishing touches to it and to put in a great deal more time at oral work than he is usually free to do. Written work is also set in the assignment, and is done by the pupils and handed in. After correcting it the teacher goes over it with each boy individually at the beginning of some period. In this way the text or reader is worked through.

It will be seen that this is only a compromise. But, as I have said, I found it impossible to get the work satisfactorily done according to the regular Dalton method. In the way I have described, though some of the advantages of the plan are lost, as for instance the allowing of the clever students to go ahead at their own pace, yet many of the advantages are kept, and the general result is a much improved attitude towards work and a much greater capacity to do things for themselves. The pupils do get some training in self-education.

With the other division of the subject, namely grammar and composition, it has been found possible to adopt a thoroughgoing Dalton system. The pupils each have a book which is the basis of the assignments which are given to them. Then besides this book there are other books in the English laboratory library to which references are

made in the assignment. It is necessary, of course, that there should be more than one copy of such books as are referred to. The more references made to a book, the more copies of the book will be necessary. The assignment is made out on the basis of the book that is in the possession of each pupil. The teacher, as he makes his assignments, goes through this book carefully and if he finds that there is some point left out which he thinks ought to be in, he puts that in the assignment. If he thinks that some particular point is not made clear in the book, he explains it clearly in the assignment. In the cases of lower classes a good deal of this explanation will take the form of putting in the vernacular what is explained in the book in English. It has been found with lower classes that there are very few books in English which the average and weaker members of the class can understand easily. Therefore in their case the assignment will be largely in the vernacular. The assignment will set portions of the grammar to be learned, and will give written exercises to be done. There will be translation exercises founded on the particular rules with which the particular assignment is dealing, and there will be composition work.

When a pupil has finished his assignment, that is, when he has done all the written work set in it and has learnt all the work set to be learnt both in the assignment and in his book, he brings himself and his exercise book to the teacher to be tested. The teacher gives him a few oral questions to see if he has learnt the work set and goes over the written work with him. If it has been satisfactorily done, the teacher gives him the next assignment. If the pupil does not know his work, or if the written work is badly done, he is sent away, after having his mistakes explained, to do it again where necessary.

During the time the class is with him the teacher is kept busy. His main job will be to help those who are in difficulties. One of the big advantages of the method is that the teacher has a good deal more time to devote to the weaker members of the class. The good ones can go ahead at their own speed with an occasional reference to the teacher. The latter can give most of his time to those who need his help most. Any time when he is not giving help he will be kept busy hearing assignments.

It is here that one of the main difficulties crops up. How is the teacher to get through the testing work if he has a large class? It has been found that with a class of twenty-five to thirty it is not possible to get through all the testing work during the period. The way in which the difficulty has been met is for the teacher to set apart a half an hour or an hour out of school hours during which pupils may bring their work to be tested and corrected. This perhaps at first sight seems to be an additional burden on the teacher. But under the class teaching system the teacher had to allot a certain amount of time each day, out of school hours, for correction work. Correction work is a bugbear the English teacher cannot get rid off. Under the Dalton system his hour of meeting with his boys takes the place of the time he put in at correction work under the old system. It must be admitted that probably the teacher, if he is at all keen, will find that he puts in more time dealing with his boys individually than he did in doing correcting under the old system. But it is also certain that he will have a great deal more satisfaction in his work and will not have the feeling that so much of his work is beating the air. There is no doubt that working under the Dalton Plan means more work or at any rate harder work for the teacher. But there is also no doubt that the results are very much more satisfying, and that, for the time spent, very much better work is put in.

Although the class is working individually there will be occasions when it will be advisable to take it as a whole or at any rate in groups. Sometimes the teacher will find that there is some point about which he is being asked several times. He then takes those who are doing the assignment in which the point has arisen and explains it to them thus saving time. He also makes a note of the point so that in a future year he can make his assignment clearer on that particular point. In the same way he may sometimes take the class as a whole. In order to ensure that oral composition is not neglected, he may have periods when he takes the class as a whole with speech competitions, story competitions, spelling matches and such things. The Dalton Plan allows us to do any of these things as necessity arises.

Each pupil should have a progress card on which the teacher marks the date when he passes each assignment. On the wall of the room should be another chart where the pupil marks the date when he has finished each assignment. From this can be seen at a glance the number of assignment which any particular pupil has finished, and from this the teacher will be able to gauge the progress of his class. This chart is necessary, for, under the Dalton Plan as under any other plan or method, there will always be those who lag behind and try to hide their lights. With class teaching they often succeed. With any sort of plan such as I have outlined they and their barrenness are known to all the world and their teacher knows exactly how much they have done or not done. Therefore he can pay them the necessary attention. This is one of the advantages of such a system. At the other end of the scale the keen boy is not held back as he is under the class teaching system but is free to go as fast as he likes, and this is another great advantage of the system. The greatest of all the advantages it bestows however, is that it teaches self-reliance, trains pupils to do things and to find out things for themselves and to think for themselves. There is no doubt that it makes the majority of pupils more interested in their work and results in a higher standard of work all round. There are, to be sure difficulties. Library books disappear; boys try to copy; uninterested boys try to upset others. But in the long run I do not think that any one who gives the method a real trial will have any doubt about the improvement that comes.

AN EXPERIMENT IN ENGLISH TEACHING

BY

MR. R. M. SAVUR, B.A. (CANTAB.)

District Educational Officer, Madura.

Every one is thoroughly dissatisfied with the low standard of attainments in English in our Secondary Schools. Every one consequently has been pointing out the cause of this and suggesting remedies. The examiners blame the teachers and the teachers in return blame the vagaries of examiners, while the parents think the whole system and the curriculum are at fault. In all this controversy that has been raging for some years now, many faults have been discovered and many remedies suggested which have resulted in no improvement. Yet all the time one thing has escaped notice altogether. Nobody has suggested, and so probably it has occurred to no one, that the fault may lie with the "direct method" of teaching English. Yet one fact alone ought to have given the clue. The days of the old Matric were the days of the Grammar-cum-translation method without text-books. Then there was no complaint of poor English. The passing of the old Matric synchronised with the universal adoption of the Direct method. Soon afterwards the general impression began to be voiced that the old Matric was better in English than the present S.S.L.C. Yet apart from the oft-repeated suggestion that more grammar should be taught, no finger has pointed at the "Direct Method" as the likely cause of the serious deterioration in the standard of English in our Secondary Schools. The doses of grammar have been increased and yet there has been no improvement. Is it not possible that the neglect of grammar in the Direct Method was after all not a serious defect and that there are other serious defects which are responsible for the positively bad English which is universally seen and heard in all our Schools?

It will be worth while analysing the "Direct Method" as practised in our schools to see whether there are any grave defects which are responsible for the present unsatisfactory condition. Once discovered it will not be difficult to avoid the defects. It is by this means and by repeated experiments that a method was finally evolved and this method has been remarkably successful in the classes in which it has been tried. The success of this method has been demonstrated by scientifically controlled experiment. Such a step was never taken with the "Direct Method". Some Inspector of Schools read Jespersen and was struck with what he said. Forthwith others took up the cry and within a short time every school was using the "Direct Method". Its superiority over the old method was never questioned and no experimental proof was demanded or offered.

To learn a language, a boy has to practise using the language himself. Merely listening most of the time to others talking helps very little—not much more than watching the drill-master doing physical jerks will develop the boy's muscles. To learn a language therefore the boy has to talk it, read it and write it. If the time at his disposal is limited then every available minute should be spent by the boy in reading, writ-

ing or talking the language. In the Secondary school a boy has 8 years to learn English. This looks a long time, long enough to learn half a dozen languages. But analysis will show that the actual time spent by any individual boy in learning English is extremely short.

Let us assume 10 periods of 45 minutes each per class per week are devoted to learning English. The school-year consists of say 35 weeks. This gives us $10 \times 45 \times 35 \div 60$ or 262½ hours per annum. On a 6 hour day basis the number of days each year devoted to English will be about 40. This it must be admitted is an extremely limited time. I am not arguing in favour of more time being allotted to English, but I am aiming at showing how well or ill this limited allowance of time is being utilised.

The Direct method as practised in our schools consists of questions and answers chiefly. The teacher puts a question and some boy answers it. So for half the period the teacher is talking and the boys are using the language for only half the period. The 40 days divided by 2 gives us the total amount of time actually utilised by the class in using the language. Now if we assume there are 40 boys in the class, the 40 boys have only 22½ minutes in which to use the language as during the other 22½ minutes the teacher is talking. Therefore to get at the amount of time any particular boy is allowed to practise the language, we have to divide $40 \div 40 \times 2$. So we see that actually under the best circumstances any particular boy in a class of 40 according to the direct method gets during a whole year only ½ a day or 3 hours' practice in using the language himself. During the rest of the 39½ six hour days of English he is merely listening to other beginners like himself talking incorrect English. Expressed in percentage each boy spends 1% of the time in using the language himself and 99% of the time in listening to others. A proper language programme should give each boy the opportunity to use the language himself for 99% of the time and allow him to listen for 1% of the time, which is quite the reverse of what is actually happening in our schools.

This brings us to another serious defect of the "Direct Method". Any particular boy in the class is listening for 99% of the English period to others speaking. Is he at least listening to correct English? Obviously not. For, if any boy is answering the teacher's question "What is this" he is as likely to make a mistake as to give the correct answer because he is attempting to use words with which he is not quite familiar. If the first boy makes a mistake the teacher passes on to the next boy who is just as likely to make a mistake as the first one. This results in the wrong form being repeated several times by the boys and at last the teacher gives out the correct form once. The listener therefore listens to the incorrect form several times but hears the correct form a fewer number of times. The laws governing memory say that what is more frequently repeated is more likely to be remembered The Direct method therefore tends to impress the wrong form more firmly on the mind of the listener. Another law is violated which tends to the same result. The wrong forms were uttered by the boys and the correct form by the teacher. Boys are more interested in what other boys say than in what the teacher says. So here again the correct form uttered once by the teacher tends to be forgotten and the incorrect form uttered by the boys will be more firmly impressed upon the listener. Fortunately our boys are not keen listeners. The Direct Method is so boring that our boys very soon learn to pretend to listen without actually doing so. If only they listened more carefully their English would have been far worse than it is.

In our method of teaching English we seem to take a delight in putting the boys

into situations that will ensure their committing mistakes. Take written composition. The boy is expected to write—frequently extempore on a subject which is neither interesting nor well-known to him. He writes something because he has to. He commits mistakes—spelling mistakes as well as grammatical mistakes. The teacher underlines them with red ink. Does not this procedure tend to impress the wrong form on the boy just like the oral-drill procedure. What I have to say about our method of teaching composition would make a full article by itself. I have just said enough to prove how the whole Direct Method programme tends to make the boys learn incorrect English.

Wrong forms are so firmly impressed on our boys by the Direct method that nothing later can be done to eradicate the mistakes boys commit. Every teacher who has been in charge of composition in the higher forms knows how boys will repeat mistakes in spite of careful corrections of composition exercises. We adopt a method which teaches incorrect English and then we attribute boys' mistakes to their ignorance of Grammar. Examiners and others who ought to know better are frequently prescribing more grammar. When larger doses of grammar have no effect upon the boys' English, teachers are blamed for not heeding their suggestions and acting on them. Does a knowledge of grammar help a boy to write correct English? In the process there are two steps. First you must be aware that you have committed a mistake. When you know you have made a mistake then you can apply your knowledge of grammar to correct it. Take music for instance. You may have learnt the science of music and know the Bairavi ragam consists of such and such notes. But if you have no ear for music, can you detect a false note when you sing or play the violin? If you are not aware that a wrong note has been struck are you likely to apply your knowledge of the science of music to correct it?

In ordinary life language is of use only if it can be used at some speed. That speed, however low it is, will not allow sufficient time for your knowledge of grammar to help to detect a mistake; for, if grammar is to make you aware of your having committed a mistake, you have to stop and analyse every sentence and parse every word that you write or utter. If you are not aware of the existence of a mistake you will not apply your grammar to correct it. A ear for correct spoken English and an eye for correct written English must be cultivated from the beginning. The boy must be made so familiar with the correct sound of a spoken sentence and the correct appearance of the written word or sentence that the slightest unfamiliarity in sound or appearance will arrest his attention. He will become aware he has committed a mistake from the strange sound or appearance of the sentence —then he will correct it even without applying his knowledge of grammar.

From all this an important principle emerges and that is "the avoidance of mistakes" particularly in the lower classes. The teacher should as far as possible avoid placing the pupil in situations in which he is likely to commit a mistake. If a pupil commits a mistake the teacher should take care that the remaining 39 boys in the class neither see it nor hear it. The Direct method ensures that 39 boys of the class shall always listen to the mistakes of the particular boy who is answering the question "what is this?"

Another principle underlying a scientific method of teaching a language is entirely overlooked by the Direct Method. In acquiring command over a language extensive reading is more important than intensive study of a detailed text. Teachers who wish to learn more about this are recommended to read a book called "Teaching the Mother Tongue" by P. B. Ballard. Much of what is

said there applies equally to the learning of a foreign language. The Direct Method totally neglects extensive reading. In the Fourth and Fifth classes generally no non-detailed texts are prescribed. In Form I probably the extensive reading is limited to about 25 pages of large type and so on in arithmetical progression.

Effects of this defect are far reaching. The teacher has to proceed slow enough to make a text of inadequate length last from June to March. He proceeds slowly with innumerable repetitions in order that he may finish the last line on the last page of the book on the last day of the year. This slow process added to the usually uninteresting subject-matter of the text makes the boys very early disgusted with the only book that is in their hands. This results in a life-long dislike for reading. Is not the main object of a school to teach a boy the reading habit? It is very easy to instil in a boy dislike for reading but difficult to make him love reading. It is exceedingly difficult to substitute for a dislike once established a liking for books.

A man who knows a language may be said to possess two vocabularies. One is what may be called his intensive vocabulary consisting of words with which he is so familiar that he can use them in expressing his ideas. The extensive vocabulary consists of words over which he has not sufficient command to use in expression but the meaning of which he can understand when he meets them in a sentence. The extensive vocabulary is always much larger than the intensive vocabulary—the sort of difference that exists between a man's intimate friends and his acquaintances. Since no opportunity is provided by the Direct method the boys' intensive and extensive vocabularies are the same. This is a serious defect. A proper language programme should provide for the development of both vocabularies. Since ability in reading with comprehension is acquired more rapidly than expression the boy should be allowed to progress at different speeds in the two. The detailed text may be of a fixed size, but the non-detailed reading of the boy should be limited only by way of his capacity to read and understand.

There is one more major defect to be dealt with and that is the absence of what is now commonly termed "motivation" in the Direct Method. It is well-known that progress depends on the strength of the motive. The younger the children to be taught the greater is the importance of proper motivation. In the Direct Method we have quite the reverse—the younger the children the drier and more desultory is the class work. It is nothing but one all eternal grind of "What is this" and "What is that" enlivened only by the "howlers" frequently committed by the pupils and occasionally by the teachers too. Is it any wonder that children learn little or nothing? Of course in the hands of a born teacher, a Direct Method class may be interesting, but how many born teachers do we get at Rs. 30 per mensem? The teachers who teach the lower classes and forms of a section are mostly "made" not born, and mostly very badly made at that. From the infant standard upwards "motivation" in class room methods is conspicuous by its absence. Naturally, brought up by these methods the sole aim of even our best boys is to pass examinations by hook or by crook. Once the last examination has been taken then good-bye to books and reading for the rest of life.

To summarise, any programme of language teaching should observe the following points:—

(1) Every boy should utilise every minute of the language period in using the language himself.

(2) "Avoidance of errors." The boy should not be placed in situations in which he is more likely to commit a mistake than to give the right answer; a mistake committed by a boy should end, as it begins, with him,

and it must not be allowed to corrupt the 39 other boys of the class.

(3) In the acquisition of a language extensive reading is more useful than intensive study, as Ballard says "quantity is more important than quality."

(4) Grammar should be taught as an "informational" subject and not with the false idea that it will improve boys' English.

(5) Class work should be properly motivated.

Devising a programme based on these principles is a very simple matter. The programme followed in the experimental classes here is equally simple to follow. It is what Americans call practically "fool-proof." Fool-proof does not mean that a boy who is a fool can be converted into a genius, but that a "made" teacher can do practically as well as a "born" teacher.

Principles (1) and (2) above, rule out oral-drilling, oral composition and the "talk and chalk" method altogether. For this is substituted individual work. The teacher proceeds as follows:—

He picks out the new words in the lesson which the boys do not know. A suitable reader ought not to contain more than half a dozen of these in a one day's portion. (Any teacher who is interested would do well to read "Language in Education" by Michael West). The first five minutes of the period are spent in teaching the boys how to pronounce these new words. Then comes the task of teaching them the meaning of these unknown words. There are three ways in which the meaning of a word can be conveyed to them.

(1) Directly, by showing the object.

(2) By giving the equivalent in the boy's vernacular or mother-tongue.

(3) Words and idiomatic phrases the meaning of which cannot be conveyed accurately by either (1) or (2) should be defined or explained in the vernacular or explained in the vernacular or mother-tongue.

The use of the vernacular in this way saves time which is a very important consideration. Whole sentences unless they are primary units like "How do you do?" should not be translated. After having taught the pronounciation of new words the teacher writes on the blackboard the meanings (in vernacular) of new words. Boys are now asked to open their text-books and study the passage set for the day and to try to understand it with the help of the vernacular meanings on the black-board of new words. While the boys are studying the teacher writes on the blackboard (or issues cyclostyled copies) questions on the text which he has prepared. These questions should be so framed that answers to them can be framed by picking out sentences from the book. As soon as a boy thinks he has understood the passage he is to write the questions and answers in his note-book with his text-book open in front of him. Closing the text-book and answering creates a situation in which he is more likely to commit a mistake and therefore is to be avoided. He should be encouraged to pick out whole sentences from the book in framing his answers for the object is to make the language of the book his own property. It is ridiculous to ask a boy to tell "in his own words" before he has acquired the words. As soon as a boy finishes writing he takes his book to the teacher. The teacher should not underline or otherwise point out any mistake; if he finds a mistake, even if it be but a comma omittted, he should tell the boy "I am not satisfied with your answer. There are mistakes. Go back to your place, refer to the book carefully and correct your mistakes". After the first two or three lessons like this, boys rarely commit any mistakes. In our experimental IV class the boys very early acquired the habit of putting commas and full stops. The Direct Method has never succeeded in doing this at any stage.

If 10 periods a week are allotted to English 4 periods are devoted to the detailed

text on the above lines. Another 4 periods are allotted to silent reading. The procedure is as follows: twenty to twenty-five suitable, interesting story-books are chosen. The language of these should be rather too easy than too difficult, and the subject-matter interesting. Two copies of each are placed in the class library so that there may be at least one book for each boy in the class. The teacher frames two or three questions requiring short answers that can be picked out from the book itself, writes these on a slip of paper, and pastes the paper inside the cover of the book. As the boy reads he notes the answers to the questions. These questions should be so spaced that the boy must read the whole book. The teacher just glances at the answers to make sure the boy has read the book. As soon as a boy finishes the book it is passed on to another boy and the former is given another book. The points to be noted in this silent reading are (1) the boys should read as fast as they can. (2) They should be encouraged to guess at the meaning of unknown words—to skip difficult or unimportant portions. (3) If a boy finds a book too difficult or uninteresting he should tell the teacher so that a more suitable book may be substituted.

The remaining two periods are allotted to play-acting and dialogues. Oral practice is given by this means which at the same time avoids mistakes and listening to incorrect English. Scenes are chosen from the detailed text and stories from it dramatised (in older classes with the help of boys). Where necessary, special dialogues and scenes are written. The class is divided into groups which rehearse the play-lets first with copy in hand and later without. Finally each group acts it in the presence of the rest of the class. After the final acting, boys are given permission to forget it. Learning by heart for immediate reproduction does not over-burden the boys as learning by heart in say June for reproduction in March would. This procedure introduces the necessary motivation as boys take keen interest in play-acting which is not too formal. At the same time it gives the necessary oral practice without mistakes. Even if mistakes are made no harm is done as the rest of the boys knowing the correct forms readily notice and correct the mistakes.

As this method is based on the individual work principle it is necessary to keep a chart showing the progress of each pupil. Such a chart also serves as a further stimulus to boys. Two sheets similarly ruled are used, one for the detailed text another for the silent reading books. The entries may even be made by the boys in the presence of the teacher. A specimen is herewith appended.

Fourth class boys are just beginning English. So a slight deviation in the programme is necessary. For the first two or three months of the long term there is no silent reading. All the periods of the week are devoted to the detailed text. Play-acting is commenced as early as the stock of words acquired will allow of it; as soon as the boys have acquired a nodding acquaintance with a couple of hundred words silent reading is commenced.

In conclusion, a few words regarding the teaching of English grammar. I have said above that Grammar should be considered an informational subject and not taught with the idea of improving the boys' English. The amount of grammar required by the S.S.L.C. curriculum can be easily taught in three years. The teaching of English grammar is therefore postponed to Form IV. In the classes from class IV to Form III no English grammar is taught. Instead of this special attention is paid to Tamil grammar (i.e. the grammar of the vernacular of the school) an attempt is made to teach this as English grammar would be taught and not in the old style. Exercises in transforma-

tion sentences, uses of tenses, direct and indirect narration and vice versa are given so that the boy gets a thorough grounding in the grammar of his vernacular. After all modern research has shown there is an appreciable amount of transfer of training. A good grounding in the grammar of the boy's vernacular is the best foundation on which to rest a knowledge of English grammar. Anyone who publishes "a Walton's Synthesis" for each vernacular would deserve the thanks of the nation.

Form X

	Book 1		Book 2		Book 3	
	D.C.	D.F.	D.C.	D.F.	D.C.	D.F.
A. Raman	5|7	8|7	..	..	8|7	10|7
B. Govindan	9|7	..	5|7	9|7	..	..
C. Krishnan	8|7	9|7	10|7	..	5|7	8|7

List of silent reading books.

1. Alice in Wonderland.
2. Through the looking glass.
3. Adventures of Ulyssis.
4. .. ..
5. .. ..

etc.

D.C.=date of commencement of book.
D.F.= „ of finishing book.

THE APPRECIATION OF POETRY

BY

MR. A RAMA AIYAR, M. A.,

National College, Trichinopoly.

Rabindranath Tagore tells us in his *Reminiscences* how, as a boy, he was deeply stirred by the sonorous rhythm of some stanzas in Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* and by the lilt of the metre of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*. even though he was then too young to understand their meaning. All lovers of poetry must have had a similar experience. Poetry is a thing of beauty and joy, and the enjoyment of it comes naturally to all normal human beings, even when that poetry is in a foreign language like English. It must, however, be sorrowfully admitted that, of the students in our schools and colleges, only an infinitesimal fraction show any real taste for poetry. How is it that so many of our boys. who are unquestionably born with a natural appetite for poetry and who have been taught poetry in the school for years, cease to read a line of poetry when their schooldays are over? Is it not clear that there is something radically wrong with the teaching of poetry in our schools?

The Headmaster of an English training school says: "Our examination system, which had its roots in 19th century utilitarianism, has so warped our educational ideals that even poetry is expected to show 'results', some tangible effects, upon which the appraiser may lay his hand." Poetry is something to be *apprehended* rather than comprehended, and nothing could be more absurd than the way in which we seek to 'examine' our students in poetry. We ask them to explain all allusions, to paraphrase passages, to summarise the subject-matter, and to perform grammatical feats of all kinds, forgetting that a student may score cent per cent marks in these exercises and yet be nowhere near the appreciation of the poetry in the piece. In fact, these exercises are inimical to all enjoyment, and reduce the study of poetry to a drudgery and a torture. It is no wonder that boys brought up under this unnatural discipline should learn to hate poetry all through their life, just as Byron tells us he learnt to hate Horace. The ordinary annotator, who scrupulously gives 'exhaustive' notes and summaries and paraphrases and even answers to questions, is the worst enemy of poetic appreciation; and the teacher who regards the substance of a poem as its chief element should be forbidden to teach poetry! Paraphrasing is a useful exercise in its own way, but good poetry is by its very nature incapable of being paraphrased. Moreover, the excessive importance attached to paraphrasing leads to the real danger of the paraphrase being regarded by the students as a substitute for the poem itself. It is a sad fact that very few of our students ever turn to the original in preference to the summary or the paraphrase; and the tragedy is that, in most cases, the teachers encourage this fatal habit.

Another notion that militates against true appreciation of poetry is that story poems are the best for beginners, as they deal with concrete matters. Very few story poems are really poetic and the study of a tale in verse is not the study of poetry, especially

when it is studied merely for the sake of the story. Even where the poem is truly poetic, as in the case of Tennyson's *Morte D'Arthur,* it seems to be studied not for its *poetic* qualities, but merely for its story interest. This is another fatal consequence of our craze for examinations. It would seem that, if poetry is to be a study of pure delight, it must be rescued at any cost from the hands of the examiners! It is not true that children can best appreciate only narrative poetry. They are, in fact, better capable of enjoying lyrics, which are the most directly emotional, when they are properly presented to them. Wordsworth's *Daffodils* and *Solitary Reaper,* for instance, are poems that go direct to the heart of any ordinary boy or girl. The teacher should, of course, get rid of the 'examination mentality', and teach the poems purely for enjoyment's sake. And, needless to say he must himself be a true lover of poetry, one who enjoys a good poem as a poem and not as a field for grammatical or linguistic exercises, and who can communicate his enjoyment to his pupils.

Poetry has been described as "an emotional and metrical appeal to the understanding, which awakens in us, in some form or other, a consciousness of beauty". Without a sense of beauty, there can be no appreciation of poetry. Even the dullest of us have some sense of beauty, and one of the great services of poetry, as of all art, is that it deepens and chastens this sense. We might not have particularly admired the rainbow before but after reading Wordsworth's famous lines:

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky,

how could we help feeling something of its beauty? After reading his poem on the Daffodils, how could we help "feeling gay in such jocund company" ever afterwards? The appeal of poetry being primarily emotional, the keener and deeper our emotions the greater must be our enjoyment of poetry. In the last resort, the nature of the poetic appeal is intangible and inexplicable, and when we come upon a passage of sheer poetry we simply yield ourselves to its charm, little caring to inquire how the effect is produced. But poetry is also an art, and we can to some extent analyse the elements of the art and note some of the most pronounced means by which the poet produces his effects.

Poetry appeals to the imagination and the emotions mainly through the ear, and the teacher should be capable of rendering in his own reading the subtlest rhythmical effects. He must himself have a trained ear, and he must enable his pupils to feel the sound beauties which are so vital a feature of poetry. I am convinced that any ordinary student of poetry can be taught to distinguish the principal kinds of metre from one another and to note the distinctive effects of different stanza-forms, without burdening him with too much technical detail. He can be taught, for instance, to appreciate the difference in movement between the trochaic verse, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," and the iambic verse of the same length, "The way was long, the wind was cold;" between the five-foot line, "The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day", and the six-foot line (Alexandrine), "which like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along". He can be taught to see the difference in effect between Shakespeare's dramatic blank verse and Milton's epic blank verse, or between the stopped couplet of Pope and the run-on couplet of Keats. He can be taught to distinguish the different notable stanzas used by poets, the ballard metre, the *In Memoriam* stanza, *the Omar Khayyam* stanza, the spenserian stanza and its adaptations, the stanzas of Arnold's *Scholar Gypsy* and *Thyrsis* and so on. He can be readily made to appreciate the difference between the Italian and the English types of the Sonnet. He can be made to appraise the emotional value of the particular form

which a poet chooses for a lyric, and explain the reason for the poet's choice. The infinite variations in rhyme-arrangement used by poets can also be studied by him with high degree of delight.

In fact, the metre or the stanza of a poem can be used as a sort of test of poetic appreciation, and it is a pity that it too often escapes study at school or college.

What is called "Sound echoing sense" is, in spite of Johnson's ridicule, a feature that is worth attentive study. It is not a matter of mere onomatopoeia, though, even in that narrow sense, it has a place in poetry. Tennyson's *Morte D'Arthur* affords several excellent examples of this.

"He stepping down
By zig-zag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shinning levels of the lake"

Here, do we not feel the striking contrast of the short, sharp sounds suggesting the rugged nature of the path by which Sir Bedivere had to go, and the soft consonants and long vowels suggesting the broad expanse of the lake? We have a similar contrast in:

"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag,—"

where the first line with its long vowels and soft consonants suggests the gentle splashing of the waves against the reed, and the second line with its short vowels and hard consonants suggests the beating of the waves against hard rocks.

"Sound suggesting sense", however, is a pervading feature of all good poetry. The general sound of a whole poem or passage always corresponds with the mood in which it is written or which it is meant to represent. In *Morte D'Arthur*, again, we have a magnificent example of this in the lines in which the actual throwing of the sword by Sir Bedevere is described, where, in Brimley's famous phrase, "every word tells of rapid, determined, agitated action, refusing to dally with the temptation that had twice overcome him." This passage is too long to quote and analyse here, but it is worth minute study as "A magazine in miniature" of the secrets of this particular art.

Alliteration, Assonance, and vowel-music are favourite devices of poets, and good poets use them with marvellous effect. The following lines from Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, which are a splendid example of perfect correspondence between sense and sound, owe much of their effect to alliteration:

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free,
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The hushing and soothing effect of a series of sibilants is well illustrated in *Lotos-eaters*:

"Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies,
Music that gentler on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes."

The "linked sweetness long drawn out" of Milton's verse is partly the result of the subtle device of a number of consonants being repeated line after line over a whole passage. Milton is also an unsurpassed master of the other devices, Assonance and vowel-music. The following passage from his *Paradise Regained* is a capital example of the rich harmony produced by a combination of all these devices:

"And ladies of the Heseperides, that seemed
Fairer than feigned of old or fabled since
Of fairy damsels met in forest wide
By Knights of Logres ,or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pellas, or Pellenore."

Repetition of words and phrases is often used with great effect by poets, as in Coleridge's:

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around;

or

"Day after day, day after day,
We struck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
On a painted ocean;

or

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!

Milton habitually uses a subtler kind of repetition to secure his "linked sweetness", as in:

"Hail, holy *light*, offspring of heaven firstborn,
Or of the *eternal co-eternal* beam
May I express thee unblamed? Since God is *light*,
And never but in unapproached *light*
Dwelt from *eternity*, *dwelt* then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate!

Here as will be noticed, the harmony is secured, not merely by repetition of but by all the devices we have noted above—alliteration, assonance, and vowel-music.

Word-magic is another feature of good poetry which we have to train ourselves to appreciate. It is indeed one of the purest of delights to enjoy the magical effect produced by single words and phrases. Browning's Abt Vogler claims that he can fashion out of three sounds, not a fourth sound but a "star". The poet too, when he is inspired, creates a "star" out of his words, often the simplest and commonest words.

Keats is noted for his magical words and phrases, as in:

"With beaded bubbles *Winking* at the brim",

or

"Now more than ever seems it *rich* to die",

or

"The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn,—"

all taken from his *ode to a Nightingale*. Wordsworth's *Solitary Reaper* has at least two such phrases—"Breaking the silence of the seas among the farthest Hebrides", and "Old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago',. The magic of proper names may be studied best in Milton, as in the passage already quoted from *Paradise Regained* or numberless others in *Paradise Lost*:

"Blind Thamyris and blind Maeonides,
Tiresias and Phinens, prophets old".

Gray's *elegy* is noted for its finely chiselled phrases, but these are the results of deliberate art and can boast of no magic. In fact nowhere in the 18th century poetry do we find the magical word or phrase; it is too deficient in imagination or vision.

True poetry always appeals to the imagination; that is, it gives us images or pictures, and the more vividly we are able to see these images with our inward eye, the better will be our appreciation of poetry. To common things the poet adds "the gleam, the light that never was on sea or land", and he also invests abstractions with an element of reality by virtue of his visualising power. The inferior poet simply writes: "All the air a solemn stillness holds" (Gray), but the great poet makes the stillness real to us by means of an image.

"The holy time is quiet as a Nun,
Breathless with adoration." (Wordsworth).

The simplest objects or phenomena he cannot describe without a picture.

"This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning"—(Wordsworth)
"The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark"—(Coleridge).

A vivid pictorial imagination is a distinguishing mark of a poet. Figures of speech are freely employed by him to give greater vividness and reality to his description. No student of poetry should fail to study their effects, especially of the four principal figures used by poets, namely the Simile, the Metaphor, the Personification, and the Hyperbole. Examples of brief poetic similies are given above, but the long and detailed similies habitually used by Milton and occasionally by other poets serve as ornaments by providing complete pictures in themselves. Milton's description of the false clergy of his time as "blind mouths" is an example of a daring metaphor, and Ruskin's analysis of the wealth of meaning contained in this phrase is the kind of thing every teacher of poetry has to do for himself and his pupils. Metaphor is most often found in combination with personification as in:

"And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong;
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along". (Coleridge)

"They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea". (Kingsley).

The second stanza of Keat's *Ode to Autumn* is a splendid example of sustained personification and Metaphor in combination. Hyberbole is a dangerous weapon in the hands of an inferior artist, but used with due restraint, it becomes an admirable handmaid of the sublime. Milton's descriptions of Satan and the fallen Angels are all splendidly hyperbolical, but they do not offend the most fastidious taste, as they are quite in keeping with the atmosphere of the poem, and as the poet is never guilty of crude definiteness in description.

"On the other side, Satan alarmed,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
Like Teneriffe or Atlas, unremoved;
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp
What seemed both spear and shield."

Description gains considerably in effectiveness by restraint, as may be seen throughout the *Ancient Mariner*. Do we not feel a thrill when we read of the Mariner's eye holding the wedding-guest spell-bound?

"He holds him with his glittering eye,
The wedding-guest stood still,
And listens like a three year's child:
The mariner hath his will."

How vividly is the dead stillness of the ocean brought out in the following stanza:

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea."

No detailed description could give us a more vivid sense of the feeling of stagnation and helplessness experienced by the Mariner and his friends. Note the subdued pathos of Milton's restrained description of the departure of Adam and Eve from Paradise:

"They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way."

or read Milton's lines on his blindness in his Book III and note how the whole passage owes its moving power to the admirable restraint of his lament.

It is clear that, in order to be able to appreciate all the aspects of poetry that we have now briefly dealt with, we must possess trained ears and eyes. The training of the ear is a thing that I wish specially to stress, because it is almost the first requisite for the appreciation of poetry and is also the most systematically neglected. The need for a trained eye must also be obvious as it is not at all likely that the inner eye should be

active where the outer eye is slow and dull. The poet is gifted with a pictorial imagination, but he is also a close observer of man and nature. Unless the study of poetry goes hand in hand with observation of nature and becomes an out-of-door study, it must degenerate into the study of mere words; and as has been well said, "It is the first distemper of learning when men study words and not things". This is one reason why so few of us are able really to enjoy the poetry we study—apart from the circumstances that most of the natural description in English poetry must be utterly foreign to us who have not seen the things described.

I have already tried to show that the subject-matter is the least important thing in poetry. This is not to say that great poetry can be written on small themes; what I mean is that some of the most beautiful poetry may deal with ideas which may not be acceptable to us, as in *Omar Khayyam* or Swin burne's *The Garden of Proserpine.* It is a fatal error to look for moral teaching in poetry. Johnson blames Shakespeare "because he is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purposes". Arnold's conception of poetry as "a criticism of life" has encouraged a wrong approach to the study of poetry. We have to realise that the function of poetry is not to teach but to inspire and delight, though good poetry, like all good art has a wholesome moral effect on us by refining our emotions.

A word has to be said, before concluding about the memorising of poetry. Beautiful poems and passages are certainly worth memorising, but it must be a spontaneous process. When it is imposed upon pupils as a task, it altogether fails of its purpose. It is a superstition that the mere memorising of poetry leads to its enjoyment. We know this from our experience. Every candidate for our S. S. L. C. examination is obliged to memorise a fixed number of lines of poetry, but who does not know that, in the vast majority of cases, this is done merely as a task, and that hardly any one cares to retain in his memory what he has thus got up! Mere mechanical memorising without real enjoyment is a mockery and a sham. Where the pupils have learnt to enjoy the poems they study, they can be trusted to choose their own passages for getting by heart.

I know that my treatment of the subject has been necessarily scrappy, but I hope I have made my main point clear—namely, that our present system of teaching and examining has been a failure, at least so far as poetry is concerned, and that we must make a determined attempt to make our pupils love and enjoy poetry for its own sake. The teacher may say he is helpless so long as he has no control over the examinations, but I believe he can do much even under present conditions to instil into his pupils some real taste for poetry It cannot be weighed in the scales of the examiner, and no certificates may be gained for it, but "it is an interest that will last when the fever and the fret of competitive examinations are over, and certificates have lost their charm; it will be a pleasure when the evil days come, and it may serve us, more than most of our studies, in preparing for the final examination."

COMPOSITION WORK IN HIGH SCHOOLS: CORRECTION OF SCRIPTS

BY

MR. A. S. VENKATARAMAN.

Chittoor.

Composition work in High schools is still an unsolved problem. Teachers continue to make the same corrections year after year and pupils with an unerring tendency commit the same errors. There are teachers who regard this as a labour of love and there are others with whom it is a labour of devotion. The experience of an American professor among Japanese students may be referred to here. "With a glow of righteous self-satisfaction he used to return batches of themes to expectant classes—themes bloody with corrections conscientiously entered in red ink and duly graded on a scale of 100 according to a 'fool-proof' system based on the law of averages. The grateful students having ascertained the grade which the American professor had bestowed on their handiwork, presumably filled their themes away in album as curiosities to be displayed with pride like old-battlescars, to their sons and their sons' sons. No further work regarding the themes was demanded of them by the indulgent professor. The latter steadily losing eyesight but accumulating virtue and reputation for conscientiousness and devotion to duty, finally left for home loaded with gifts and expressions of undying gratitude. Ten years later, the same professor believes all that accomplished precisely nothing."

This unfortunate experience is shared by many a teacher even to-day and the solution is still as far as ever.

The aim in the correction of composition exercises is, it must be admitted, to help the process of self-education, to enable the pupils to detect the errors themselves and to correct them by themselves. No teacher of any scholarship or eminence can pretend to wave the magic wand and transform every pupil into a brilliant essayist. His burden, the teacher's burden in general terms, is to make the pupil self critical. The less necessary the teacher becomes, the more successful the teaching is. And here lies the immensity of the problem.

The treatment of the malady is two-fold preventive and curative. Prevention is better than cure and so it enjoys precedence and rank.

One deplorable feature of our school organisation is that the composition scheme is not carefully planned out or organised. Exercises are prescribed off-hand and are done with as much ease and thought by the pupils. Any scheme of composition work to be successful, requires careful forethought and attention in planning out as well as careful scrutiny in the correction of scripts.

In planning out the scheme, the capacities of children must be considered. From the simple one pass on to the complex and so there must be a progress in difficulty. From practice in sentence construction, pupils may pass on to writing a paragraph and thence to a passage containing a number of paragraphs. Exercises on sentence

the mistakes and rewrite them. This has to be checked by the teacher.

Here we come to an interesting portion in the topic. In a class or section, 40 strong, this work is found heavy. Knowing as we do, how many hours' work is put down for the teacher, how much of written work is done by the pupils in these days of "note-books", a varied collection to suit the multiplicity of subjects, how it often involves time and energy for a teacher to simply cast a glance at the enormous quantity of written work, we shall be dubbed as day-dreamers or visionaries if we insist on re-valuation or recorrection of rewritten work. Still it has to be done somehow. It is an unsound maxim to judge a teacher's work by the number of passes in the examination but every teacher has got to salvage his conscience. It will be a serious state of affairs indeed if in a class handled by a teacher, the results are poor or far below the Presidency Average. Let the teacher try to satisfy himself by trying to make the correction work more profitable to the pupil.

In experience it has been found that in a class of 40 pupils, some experiment is necessary. The section can be divided into four or five groups and each group may be entrusted to a leader for some kind of tutorial work in composition. The leader is given instructions and he marks the mistakes with a lead, or different mistakes with different leads. Of course, this has to be guided, looked into and checked by the teacher and in some cases it may not be possible at all, if the class consists of only mediocre youths. This practice depends for its success on two or three pupils of outstanding merit. Or the teacher himself has to take it up outside the class. Then the amount of English composition will be limited by the amount that the teacher can correct. Generally one composition a week may be attempted in a class of thirty pupils.

Systematic correction presupposes or implies a plan and a programme. The errors have got to be classified in a notebook as they relate to spelling, grammar or idiom or other things. The more obvious errors have to be singled out. The correct forms have to be drilled.

It is often advantageous to set a subject for pupils to think out at home and write in class. We know that they are tempted to take the assistance of elders at home. If such assistance is a real help, let us not quarrel with it. Only the pupils should not copy from any manuscript or book in the class-room.

Writing is an art that can be acquired by regular practice, and imitation at certain stage supplies the initiative and stimulus. Let there be scope for the one and encouragement for the other.

To conclude, no rule of thumb can be imposed. The teacher is the master of the situation and he is the best judge of his difficulties and the needs of his pupils. If only his hand freely carries out what his heart feels and the mind thinks, the task of correction becomes a labour of devotion, nay a labour of love.

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN INDIAN SCHOOLS

BY

MR. K. S. VENKATASUBBAN, B.A., L.T.,

Training College, Mysore.

THE PLACE OF ENGLISH IN INDIAN SCHOOLS.

The value and importance of the study of English have been so well recognised in our country that there is hardly any need for justifying its place on the curriculum. But although the subject has been accorded an unquestionable place in the curriculum of most secondary schools, still importance varies not only from place to place but also from province to province. However, we may assert that it is one of the primary subjects of the curriculum and as such it gets a decent share of the time and energy of both the teachers and the pupils of our secondary schools.

The position accorded to English depends mainly on two factors: — (1) the aim or aims kept in view by the agency imparting education or controlling it; and (2) the district or locality in which the school is situated. Where the object is to give an up-to-date education by providing a high standard of instruction in all subjects, English gets a large number of periods and such schools generally attract a large number of pupils. Again, if a school is situated in a good locality where there are many educated parents, English is likely to have a predominence and a larger share of attention is paid to it than in a place where the people are, generally speaking, illiterate and content with a less advanced type of education. Conversely, in schools situated in rural areas, whose children are drawn mostly from parents of agricultural or industrial classes, the amount of time devoted to this subject is small, and more attention is paid to other subjects such as arithmetic, elementary science or nature study. On the whole it might be stated that the place given to English in many of our secondary schools is in no way inferior to that granted to any other subject, and very often it exceeds even the place given to the pupils' mother-tongue. In the lower classes of Middle schools, where English is begun, the subject is given 7 to 8 periods a week, while in High schools it gets from 7 to 9 periods weekly. The number of periods allotted to the study of the mother-tongue is 6 to 7 periods a week in the middle school and 4 to 5 periods a week in the High School.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE TEACHER.

The minimum qualification of the teacher of English both in the Madras Presidency and in the Mysore State is the possession of a completed secondary school Leaving Certificate with or without teachers' training. Such teachers are generally in charge of the lowest classes of secondary schools where the study of English is commenced. This state of affairs is hardly satisfactory, for, leaving a few exceptions, the average secondary grade trained teacher is not adequately prepared for meeting the needs of the pupils who are trying to learn a foreign language such as English. Often the tea-

cher's knowledge of the foreign language is itself shaky and his control over the foreign medium, which he will have to employ if he follows the Direct method, more deplorable still. In the opinion of Dr. West, most of the defects of the present day teaching of English are due to the fact that the pupils in the lowest classes are entrusted to the care of teachers who are themselves the weakest units in the teaching staff of the school. As a result of this the pupils acquire certain bad habits in the use of the foreign language which it is very hard to eradicate afterwards.

Let us turn for a moment and consider the qualifications expected of teachers of foreign languages in countries other than India. In most of them, and especially in England and America, the masters are expected to possess a high academic degree such as a masters' degree or an Honours degree with or without a short stay in the country whose language the teacher wishes to teach. Now all this may look high sounding and impracticable, and rightly so; for, at least for some generations to come, we cannot hope to get such highly qualified teachers for doing the work in the middle schools of our country. All that we can reasonably expect is that the teacher of English should be duly qualified for his task, not merely by virtue of his having passed one or two public examinations, but by virtue of his special abilities and tastes in the foreign language. Until we man our schools with such competent persons, there is not much hope for the improvement of English teaching. The chief qualifications of a would-be teacher of English are:—

(a) He must have a tolerable acquaintance with the principal English authors and be conversant with their writings.

(b) He must have a fair command over the spoken and written forms of the language.

(c) He must possess a practical knowledge of the Phonetics, or the science of voice-production and sounds, of the language.

(d) He must have a pleasant and manageable voice.

(e) He must have an ear for detecting the slightest variations in the sense or sound of the foreign language expressions and he must be capable of setting right the defects, whenever they occur.

(f) Lastly he must be an enthusiast and must not shirk either time or money in the pursuit of development of skill in that language.

Where these qualities and requirements are not naturally present the management or the department should try to supply and foster them either by vacation courses or by training classes conducted under the guidance of experts in the field.

THE USE OF SCHOOL BOOKS AND THE LIBRARY.

This is a very important subject and as such needs careful attention on the part of the educators. It is a well-known fact that many of our children are lacking in the habit of using books for information or pleasure. For this the schools as well as teachers are to blame. "If the habit of using books is to be duly encouraged, the provision of adequate and carefully selected school libraries is most important. The teachers should know the contents of the library and be able to advise the scholars accordingly." Regarding the care and management of libraries, the handbook of suggestions for Teachers issued by the Board of Education lays down the following:—"The management of the Library should be as far as possible entrusted to individual scholars appointed by the head teacher. Catalogues should be made and kept up-to-date, names of borrowers and books borrowed should be duly recorded and every opportunity should be taken

of training the pupils to appreciate the privileges and responsibilities of library users. They will thus acquire the library habit and be more likely to make the intelligent use of public libraries after leaving school."

A criticism that is often levelled against pupils both here and elsewhere is that they are incapable of making proper use of books This is all the more pitiable in these days of self-education. The handbook referred to above says in this connection:—"Elementary schools have often been criticised on the ground that even in the highest classes the scholars have been almost entirely dependent on the teacher, and have too seldom been set to derive information from books by their own *unaided* efforts, or to use books as works of reference". Further on it adds: in the upper classes (of elementary schools, children should realise that there are other ways of using books besides reading them straight through. They should be taught to search in books for information on some specific subject and to *select* and *arrange* the essential points in a book or chapter." "Very essential powers these, and as such every pupil should try to have them and as the Board of Education themselves recognise. "To do this successfully they (the pupils) will need considerable practice, and at first they must have some guidance from the teacher, which should, however, gradually be needed less and less". Our schools should pay more attention to this aspect of teaching in future.

II

THE TEACHING OF SPELLING AND GRAMMAR.

These are commonly regarded as "Bug Bears" by the teacher of English and it is not uncommon to find certain teachers who are very despondent when they think of the errors perpetrated by the pupils under these heads. True it is that knowledge of either is mechanical to some extent, but it can be made rational provided the teacher bestows sufficient care and attention over their teaching. The main difficulties of spelling are due to the fact that English spelling is by no means very regular and systematic but on the other hand shows a large number of idiosyncrasies. However, the majority of words are spelt in a regular manner and need little extra care. All that need be done to foster the habit of spelling words correctly is:—(1) to limit the number of words for such treatment to the barest possible minimum; (2) to make the teaching systematic and (3) to institute certain set exercises such as transcription, dictation or free composition within the range of the pupils' reading vocabulary.

At this stage it is necessary to clear away a certain misconception. "It is usually said that dictation is a method of testing rather than of teaching spelling. This is altogether wrong. Once the children have learned to spell some of the more common words and can write with some fluency there is no more valuable exercise than dictation". (Some notes on the teaching of spelling by Dr. William Boyd, The New Era, October, 1928). Hence this exercise can be made very useful in strengthening the spelling ability of the pupils.

Grammar has no doubt passed through several vicissitudes during the last twenty years. As most of us are aware, it enjoyed unquestionable prestige prior to 1910, in the days of the old matriculation examination. Subsequently it fell on evil days and during the next few years it was altogether neglected in many schools. The prevailing impression was that much grammar was not needed for the ordinary use or appreciation of language and whatever was needed for this purpose could be obtained 'incidentally' by the pupils. This view held the field for nearly a dozen years, when it gave place to a more rational outlook in which grammar is accorded a legitimate place in the curriculum, although its method of tea-

ching has undergone a radical reform since then.

The attitude adopted towards the teaching of grammar differs with different educationists. Says Dr. Michael West, one of the foremost reformers of teaching: "The error which has in the past been made with grammar is that it has been treated as a form of *diet*, when actually it is a *medicine*. Teachers have acted as if bad grammar were normal, and have prescribed the study of a whole book of grammar as part of the routine; whereas bad grammar should *not* be normal, any more than bad health is. Bad grammar is (or should be) an occasional indisposition due to a specially virulent infection, or to a temporarily lowered resistence; and the teaching of grammar should be an occasional prescription designed to rectify an abnormal state which the hygienist has failed to prevent". Professor Whitney in the preface to his essentials of English Grammar, says: "That the leading object of the study of English grammar is to teach the correct use of English, is, in my view, an error, and one which is gradually becoming removed, giving way to the sounder opinion that grammar is a reflective study of language, for a variety of purposes, of which correctness is only one, and a secondary or subordinate one . . . .". As against these let us see what the Board of Education think regarding the subject. They say:—"The intelligent study of language will necessarily involve some teaching of grammar. When children have acquired a reasonable command of language they will realise that it is not an incoherent assortment of words but that different words perform different functions and are related to each other in a variety of ways. The aim of the teaching of grammar is to explain to them these functions and relations." Thus we see the place of grammar is settled beyond controversy and the only change needed if any, is in the method of treatment. Now all progressive teachers realise that the best method of learning grammar is by induction, care being taken however to impress the facts learned by requiring the pupils to apply them to fresh instances whenever opportunity arises.

COMPOSITION.

This again is a neglected branch of English teaching. No doubt the practice of setting exercises for written composition and afterwards correcting them in or out of school hours is very old, but the work has usually not been systematic, nor has it been governed by a set purpose clearly visualised by the teacher. To achieve the best results the teacher of composition should bear in mind the following:—

(1) Composition is the art of expressing one's thoughts whether in speech or in writing. Hence before asking the pupils to 'compose' the teacher should make sure that the pupils have really something to say. As some one has remarked, pupils must write because they have *something* to write, and not because they *have to write* something.

(2) As composition is the art of genuine expression, the thoughts and ideas must be the pupil's own, or, in other words, the pupil must have felt or realised whatever he is trying to express. As John Morley has said, sincerity is the greatest virtue not only in public life but also in the art of expression.

(3) Pupils must be set good models of speech and writing. The importance of this cannot be overestimated. As Findlay says, ". . . . . . the school should givs its pupils the opportunity of enjoying the best models —hearing, learning by heart, reciting good specimens—so that what has been acquired first on the subconscious plane becomes matter of conscious taste, of selection, of appreciation. Such experience is far more valuable than artificial exercises in composition, especially when the themes chosen for writing excite little or no interest in the mind of the writer."

(4) Lastly we cannot lay undue stress on the value of correction by the teacher. He it is that must always stand by the pupils giving them suggestions, pointing out errors, and exhibiting good models. The work of correction will lose much of its value and point if it be not done sympathetically. The pupil should feel that all the while the teacher is pointing out mistakes, he is endeavouring to lay the proper foundations for the edifice of English speech and writing.

In the above outline of the teaching of English I have attempted to lay before the readers a few suggestions regarding the handling of what is admittedly one of the most important subjects of the school curriculum. I earnestly pray that my fellow-teachers would view them sympathetically and try to translate into practice as much as they can. Such a step is sure to result in progress from the point of view of teachers as well as pupils.

ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH*

BY

MR. E. M. JESUDASAN, B.A., L.T.,

Principal, Danish Mission High School,
Tiruvannamalai.

At the very outset, I must submit that the subject, as it is worded, staggers me with its immensity and neither time nor my qualifications would entitle me to speak on the subject as it is. Hence you will kindly excuse me if I define and set limits to this subject that I desire to handle. The first and most obvious limitation is (1) that our talk to-day will be the teaching of English to Indian boys and more especially to South Indian boys reading in Secondary schools and (2) the second and less obvious one is the English teaching done by Indian teachers.

Hence if I now may define my subject, it will read as "The Teaching of English by Indian teachers in the Secondary Schools of S. India." Even so, you will agree with me that my inference drawn from the work of a few individual schools and school-masters is not likely to be a correct expression of facts obtaining in a fairly large number of schools. Such an expression, supported by statistics is possible with only those few who, by virtue of their profession, inspect or visit schools. Hence I do not claim exactness either for my inferences or my suggestions.

I would first like to examine the defects in the teaching of English that have come to my notice in the shape of criticisms from others or stray thoughts while observing lessons or correcting compositions. There are several ways of testing the teaching done in a class; and the one that is very familiar to the Headmaster and to the Educational officers seems to be the writing down of criticisms off-hand, thoughtfully or thoughtlessly, when attending to a lesson given by a teacher. I do not propose to discuss the merits of this method here, but leave it to you to elicit or screw it out from those who employ it. The second test, and a very familiar one to most of us, is the test of Public examination results of a school in the different subjects, and incidentally in English. Those who adopt this method do not realise that the S. S. L. C. examination, as it is conducted at present, is not so much a test of efficiency as of mere memory. For instance, of the two English papers, the first paper is nothing but a test of memory; and pupils are so thorough from cover to cover of this "Detailed Text" that the examiner has to demand his answers in the pupils' own language under threat of discounting book-language. The second paper carries 40 per cent of the marks again for memory work; and this fact is so much realised by the "Notes Maker" that he prepares ready made answers for all sorts of questions on the non-detailed texts. In this respect at least the present S. S. L. C. examination has lowered the standard of English more than the old Matriculation.

But the right sort of examination of the pupils in the knowledge of English they had derived from the texts and the teaching should, I believe, form one of the best tests of measuring the efficiency of the method employed. For instance, a reading or

*A paper read at the half yearly meeting of the North Arcot District Teachers' Guild.

recitation test will provide ample evidence of the teacher's ability to impart correct pronunciation, an intelligent grasp of the matter studied and an appreciation of the style and thought contained in the study. And in the same way, a written test would bring out the pupil's training in arranging his ideas, in setting them forth in simple and correct English and in writing a clear and legible hand. So much even for examinations as they are conducted at present. But generally these points are overlooked in the hurry of conducting examinations and correction of answer papers, that very often we are dissatisfied with the results of our school examinations.

One of the main reasons why we do not pay so much importance to the proper conduct of these class or school tests is that we forget the fact that English, the most intricate of all living languages, is handled by us Indians, a Tamil, a Telugu or an Urdu man. I would like to invite your attention to this, the second limitation that I mentioned at first, as that is one of the main causes of defective teaching in English. For being strangers to the genius and to the common and colloquial use of the language, our standard of English is far below that which one would expect of a teacher of English. And what is our standard? It is the English of the text-books we have studied, the English of the Indian newspaper and journal, the English of our teachers in days gone-by and it is the English of our friends with whom we have accounts or the misfortune to talk in that language. This accounts for the paucity of commonplace words and colloquial expressions in our class-rooms and conversations and the glibness with which we deliver addresses—this present discourse being an instance in point. This defect is further enhanced by the fact that, though very often the employment of a specialist is conceded for most of the subjects, it has become the custom to entrust the teaching of English to every available teacher irrespective of his ability to handle it in the best way possible. It is hard for most of us to recognise our own limitations, but harder still to stand back and let others do what we could not. Thus our eccentricities of pronunciation, our mannerisms, our vernacularisations, our wrong idioms and a host of our curiosities find their way into the class rooms and into the poor brains of our pupils. Before we leave this part of our subject, I should like to mention a third and a rather serious obstacle to the correct teaching of English in schools; the aspiration of some of us to be known as authors of books—of English books intended to teach the language. Many of the story books brought out by our well-meaning Indian brothers and graded to the print, probably by the publisher, have neither grade in them nor the English that would suit the grade. You could easily run through a few of them and make a list of all the unidiomatic and unEnglish English and see how it would work to thrust all that down the throats of the innocents, and leave them to unlearn all that rubbish later in their school or college career. I have no quarrel with those who write books in English on non-language subjects. The medium of English, though imperfect, is pardonable in consideration of the value of the subjects treated. But in so far as the teaching of the language is concerned, I believe that I will content myself with imparting whatever English I can to my class and not give publicity to it by publishing books in English. It behoves us, teachers of English, to study the language we are teaching, to keep our minds fresh with good literature, to rid ourselves of the vernacular constructions and mannerisms and strive to suit our methods to the needs of our pupils.

Having had a look at ourselves, let us turn to the pupil and his needs; and let us remember that he is also an Indian. If we remember this fact, then we should be careful as to the methods we use to teach him

English, and not swallow wholesale any method that is advertised as the only right one. I shall not tire your patience by describing and criticising the different methods that are now in vogue, but simply state the stages at which some of these methods are helpful. I claim no infallibility or originality for these observations and I am open to correction if I go wrong. But it appears to me that 'Direct Method' is primarily meant for the infant stage when children are not quite conversant with the connotation of words in their own mother-tongue. The linking of a word or a phrase with a concrete object, picture or action is possible only when these are yet unfamiliar to the child. The Indian child is generally introduced to English in the 3rd or the 4th class; and by this time, he is familiar with the connotation of a number of words in his own mother-tongue describing objects or actions observed in his surroundings. When we give another word, in English, for the same objects or actions, we are simply supplying English substitutes for vernacular words, even when such words are introduced by the 'Direct Method'; in other words, we are actually giving a list of synonyms—and I should think more depends upon giving the right synonym than upon the method by which this synonym is introduced. But even so, there will be many objects which are yet unfamiliar to the pupils, though the words and phrases themselves are very common in English—as words relating to articles of dress, of the table, of household furniture, phrases relating to greetings, to games or descriptions of weather or nature, these may be usefully introduced by the "Direct Method". But when the pupils have passed that stage, it is more or less waste of time and energy to stick to the Direct Method. Sometimes the grown-up pupils behave as if their teacher was of a much lower order of intelligence than themselves, and assume an air of superior wisdom when a teacher tries the Direct Method for objects or actions known and recognised; such lessons, instead of drawing out the interest and the efforts of the pupils make them dull and self-satisfied.

Very often, I have found that the Question-and-Answer method along with the free-translation method makes a lesson much more interesting to grown-up boys, as it helps them to fix up their ideas and to discover the difference between vernacular and English constructions. There can be no denying the fact that the best pupil in English is the one who can express in correctly constructed idiomatic English his ideas or thoughts, whether these thoughts or ideas are completely or incompletely formed and described in his mind in his own mother-tongue. And hence, it will do the pupil the greatest service if he grasps the thought or idea contained in a sentence and learn the English way of expressing them. No hard and fast rule can be set for the employment of the various methods and devices, as very often, much depends upon the teacher's resourcefulness and his ability to utilise his experience either to reform existing methods or develop new ones to suit his needs.

In this connection, I should like to mention a false notion that somehow has pervaded the atmosphere of the English teacher, *viz.*, that drilling in constructions and forms of sentences can improve the English of his pupils and can take the place of extensive or extra reading. This "Drilling" I must say again belongs to the beginner's stage—probably to that stage when the pupil learns the art of constructing sentences with a single subject and predicate. But when once he gets into the realm of casting complex and compound sentences nothing but a sub-conscious familiarity with a fairly large number of sentences of every form and type can guide the pupil to a correct construction and give him the best choice of words and phrases. It was probably this aspect of English teaching that induced the

originators of the S. S. L. C. scheme to deprecate the teaching of grammar and to introduce non-detailed readers; and I am not very much convinced of the usefulness of the inclusion of grammar questions—first one and latterly two—in the S. S. L. C. examination papers of recent years.

Another factor that disturbs the good work of the English teacher is the limitation set down by a syllabus, either by the Department or the school. A syllabus is oftentimes dull and unworkable because the individual teacher reads either more or less into the syllabus than the one who made it. There is nothing wrong in laying down a syllabus, but there is everything wrong in the way in which it is worked, if the teacher considers the syllabus an end in itself. A syllabus in English can be considered as only a means whereby the pupil may come to understand and use a foreign language with ease in speech and in writing. There may be a certain amount of exactness in working a mathematics or a science syllabus; but a syllabus for English cannot claim any exactness unless the syllabus-maker is willing to write his books in accordance with his syllabus. If this latitude allowed by an English syllabus were borne in mind, much of the unsatisfactory work turned out in the lower classes will naturally disappear and greater time could be devoted to extra reading which should be the bed-rock of any progress in a foreign language.

The last and the most serious obstacle that stands in the way of improving the knowledge of English—or for the matter of that any subject—is the importance assigned to examinations and the winning of a certificate by the pupil, his parent, his teacher and his school. We, South Indians, are probably hyper-æsthetic to such a degree that we pay more attention and respect to the varnish, the label, the appearance—the gown and the certificate—than to substantial work and character; and I ask you to excuse me when I say that much of the shallow instruction given in our schools can be traced to this defect in ourselves or our educational system. Recognising the many difficulties that beset our path, we would have done a real service to our pupils, if by our teaching, we could create a self-confidence in our pupils in expressing their thoughts in English, if we should kindle in them a desire to read good books and if we could develop the ability in them to appreciate all good literature.

SPELLING AND ITS TEACHING

BY

MR. C. V. H. RAO, M.A., B.ED.

Spelling is one of the greatest puzzles that a beginner meets with in his endeavour to learn English. There is, it is pointed out, no rhyme or reason in the formation of English words. We believe the unfortunate child when he finds words like "to" and "go", "do" and "so". As soon as he reconciles himself to it, he comes across "though" and "through", "rough" and "plough", "how" and "bough" and loses all practice. When further on he is confronted with "sum", "some" and "psalm", he gives up all hope in disgust.

To tide over the difficulty various methods have been suggested and tried and all these can be reduced into two. The old alphabetic method (or the oral spelling method) and the modern look-and-say method (or the eye-spelling method), the phonetic method being no other than another form of the abecedarian method. I do not support or defend any of these, but merely point out the difficulties in the commonly accepted look-and-say method for the thoughtful consideration of the exponents of this view.

Mr. Wren sums up his arguments in support of the look and say method as follows:

(1) Since form is a matter of the eye and spelling is form, let us teach through the eye.

(2) Since the sounds of letters do not make the sounds of words, let us avoid sounds in spellings and teach through the eye .

(3) Since words may be spelt alike and sound quite differently, letters must be rejected as a guide to sounds.

(4) Since the word is the unit of speech, let us deal with words and leave letters alone.

Let us examine the arguments one after the other and see how far they are cogent.

(1) There is no doubt that form is a matter for the eye but spelling is not form merely, it is grouping of forms which also suggests the sound. Letters are forms, and words are composite form having meanings. The unitary forms should be few in number and simple in character, otherwise it would be very difficult to learn them. The association of sounds with ideas is a very difficult task and the difficulty will be still more enhanced by asking pupils to associate ideas and meanings with forms, and again forms with sounds. If there be some connection between the form and the sound the dffiiculty is to a great extent minimised. If form is to be associated with meanings it would be better to substitute hieroglyphics like those of the ancient Egyptians or of the old Mexicans in place of the English alphabet. There would then be some resemblance or suggestion, however remote it may be, between the form and the meaning.

As regards (2) and (3), it is said that letters do not make sounds of words. Let us open a dictionary and scan every letter of every word. What shall we find? The letters are a sage guide to the pronunciation, although no doubt with large aberrations. There are variations in the case of vowels, but consonants are almost a safe guide to the sounds. How many cases are there when *L* does not sound like its corresponding sound in the vernacular? Perhaps in only

one case and that in "Colonel". There are a few cases of silent L which can be counted on one's fingers. Now do we reject the rules for making plural forms of nouns simply because there are reasonable and unreasonable exceptions to them? 'It is surely better to have some method instead of no method" It is true, in rules for spelling, exceptions are sometimes so wayward that they form rules by themselves; for example, "committee" has got no sister or brother to come under the same roof; but that is no reason for rejecting the rules when they are available.

(4) Words are the units of sentences, and not of speech. In speech the sound of the sentence, and not the sound of the individual words is taken into consideration. Letters are units of sounds, and we cannot leave them alone. If we take words to be the units of speech, words will usurp the place of letters, and letters will be as wide as the whole vocabulary, like that of the Chinese. Now, the question is, what help do we derive by enlarging the alphabet? Will it simplify matters? If so, the Chinese would have a large following. It would be merely burdening still more the already over-burdened pupils with the task of associating the forms and sounds.

It is argued that proof of the pudding is in its *eating*; but every method must have a sound theory to support it. So long as we do not follow the Chinese we cannot do away with the letters, but must of necessity have to follow the abecedarian method, look and-say method or whatever method we adopt for learning, spelling or form, but the fundamental thing is *we must remember* the spelling or form of words. The question therefore is, how best we do so? In the "look-and-say" method use our eye merely, so habit is formed only of the eye, having nothing else to corroborate its testimony, whereas in the ordinary oral method, impressions are received in the minds through the double doors of the eye and the ear, and habits of the tongue, of the eye and of the ear are formed—one helping the other in case of necessity.

Some are found to scribble over the blotting paper to decide the correct spelling. This has been made a ground for supposing spelling to be a matter for the eye only, but the same can equally well be used as an argument of the hand habit.

To be able to read merely i.e., to have the mere mechanical ability to say about the words of a certain book without knowing the meaning is to all intents and purposes worthless. But it is not altogether so when the words are very soon associated with their meanings. A tongue-drill, is, therefore, to a very great extent helpful in the pronunciation of unknown words or foreign words transcribed in Roman characters. Pupils taught by the look and say method will stop short in the middle of a sentence containing one such word, but a student taught by the oral method will pronounce the word, however difficult it may be, and try to gather the meaning, if possible, from the context.

The Library and the English Lesson

By

Mr. K. Vedantadesikhan, B.A., L.T.

Headmaster R. R. High School, Mylapore.

The library of the school is not a mere collection of books. It is not the number of books that makes up a good library. Time was when no pupil was ever permitted to get into the library. He had to stand at the counter and choose his books at random, from the list of books given in the catalogue. But, for us of this decade, the library means more of the spirit of the activity of the workshop. It has become a flower garden where the children go actively about, make their own collections and prepare their garlands. It is no more the dull and unattractive place it was, where "Admission is only on permission". The following observations on the subject are based upon our experiences in the limited sphere of our school.

"How to make the school library function?", was a great problem with us for some time. The addition of volumes of "The book of knowledge" and those of "The people of Nations" helped us in the earlier stages to get over the trouble and made the library somewhat attractive. A library to become attractive and useful should offer the following facilities:—1. Interesting and really useful books with facilities for the boys to have a look at the books themselves. 2. A specialist librarian, a member of the staff, who has some interest in the advancement of studies, who knows the nature and varieties of books at his disposal and who can understand the needs and tastes of the pupil and recommend books according to their needs 3. A few hours allotted for the purpose so that the pupils may cultivate the habit of going to the library, making references and studying independently. In view of these things which have been found essential for efficient library work, we devote one period in three working days for library work. A teacher is in charge of the library who draws up a list of books suitable for each standard and keeps it in the library for reference. He also guides the pupils in the matter of selecting the books. For each standard the minimum number of books to be read is announced and at the end of the term one or two questions are given on those books in the terminal examination papers. The object of such an enterprise is only to stimulate extensive reading on the part of the boys. To some extent a correlation of studies is attempted between the class lessons and the library work. 'The Life of Nelson', 'The Story of Joan of Arc', and similar books have a connection with their History subjects. There are also many elementary and simple stories of exploration and science readers which have relation to their geography and science lessons. The teacher recommends a few books available in the library that are directly related to their lessons which might be of some use for the pupils. The library is thus made to supplement the work of the class room. The library offers better facilities for the pupils to work at things independently as in the laboratory or in the workshop, and their interest in

such work is maintained when it is related to their class lessons. More depends upon the energetic and educated librarian who creates a love for extensive reading and guides them in the selection of books.

Now for library work in regard to the English lesson. There are plenty of allusions, classical and Biblical which the students are asked to study in advance by consulting suitable books which are to be found in the library. They are asked to read and make short notes of the authors whose lessons they get in their detailed prose and poetry selections:—Tennyson, Wordsworth, Goldsmith, Byron, Grey, Mathew Arnold, George Barrow, Irving, Dickens, Hawthorne, and other renowned authors are studied a little more than they are done in the selection. For example, in the selection "The Dragon's Teeth" prescribed for the S. S. L. C. examination, only a portion of the lesson is included. The boys have a real desire to know the whole story and more about Cadmus. So they are advised to read the lesson fully in the original and if possible one or two other stories written by the same author. The story of Sancho Panza may also be read fully in the abridged edition of Don Quixote. In connection with the selections on Julius Caeser, selected portions of the original may be read in the classes creating an interest in, and a desire for, the study of the original. It is along these lines that the English Lesson could be made an introduction to the study of English literature. During the library periods the students are advised to read such lessons as are thus directly related to their class work and as such recommended by the teachers. In the fourth and fifth forms they are not expected to read more than four books for a course. The students have also the option of making their own selection of books suited to their tastes. But the English teacher or the librarian bears in mind that English is only one of the subjects to be studied, and great care is taken to provide ample time for the study of other subjects. But without an extensive reading of simple and good English books it is very difficult to get a correct grasp of the language. Such an extensive reading can only be inspired by a learned librarian who can understand the psychology of the pupils and guide them according to their aptitudes and abilities. The librarian must be in a position to read out interesting extracts and sometimes give the gist of some useful books, so that the boys may be made to take interest in these books.

The library hall, R. R. H. School.

Another important incentive for extensive reading is the opportunity we offer to the students to get into direct contact with the books. Very often it happens that we only place a catalogue—printed or typed—of books in the hands of the pupils with no occasion to see the books themselves. From the names found on the catalogue one has to choose his books and this does not always happen to be correct and interesting. Then the book has at once to be returned and another of no better merit chosen. Instead, if the book-cases are kept open at the library periods, the pupils have occasion to look at the books and make a choice of books suited to their tastes and abilities During their library periods, the pupils

make their own selection of books or take the recommended books and use the library hour for reading extra book. The library hour by itself cannot afford time enough to finish the books. The library hour may be utilised for teaching the boys how to proceed with the reading of an extra book. What strikes one more than anything else, is the strenuous attempt made by the boys as in the workshop, or in the playfield to realise their individuality, to attempt to do a thing himself, and take a pride in having done it himself. Such a spirit of the laboratory work or workshop spirit is highly essential for provoking the interest of the pupils in language study. The English lesson just as other lessons becomes a boredom and is calculated to lull the boys to sleep if the teacher goes on with his explanations, annotations and lectures.

It has been very carefully observed that the language of the pupil does not very much improve by the teacher's elaborate notes and other explanations. What has been found to be more useful is the attempt on the part of the pupils themselves to explain passages, to use words, phrases and idioms occuring in the lesssons and make them their own and write short essays on the main topics of the lessons.. Jut as in the physics laboratory, the practical work bears relation to the theory taught and is tended to make it better understood, even so in the English lesson the English library period is devoted to answering questions set on the lessons, and to reading new books. In the high school classes the boys cannot and ought not to be left to themselves and are really in need of guidance and suggestions. This can be done only by the co-operation of the teacher-librarian who is in charge of the library. An attempt on these lines has been found successful.

But the library period becomes a waste if the boys are left unguided and are asked to read whatever they like. When left to themselves most of the boys have no idea of useful extensive reading nor does such a period help or supplement the class work in any way. The librarian has to be in the library and the pupils need to be given definite work either doing the excercises or reading a book recommended in the class.

The school library is divided into four sections, English, History and Geography, Science, and Mathematics and the subject masters are the librarians in charge of the sectional libraries. In the English section of the library there are books on fiction, poetry, grammar, and composition. Reference books like the Consise Oxford Dictionary, the book of Classical Allusions, Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, The Holy Bible, etc., are kept always in an open rack so that they may be available at all hours for the boys and teachers for reference. The reference books are of great use not only to the boys but also to the teachers. In addition, there are also other kinds of interesting books like "The Book of Knowledge", "Peoples of All Nations" in which the boys get themselves much better interested than in their regular class work. In the English library there are also magazines like "My Magazine", "Times of India" "Illustrated Weekly", and the magazines of this school and of other schools. They are all kept within the easy reach of the boys for ready reference and use. As for the time devoted we are devoting only two periods a week for V and VI forms and three periods a week for fourth form. We could not spare more time as we have to give away six periods a week for manual occupations.

It is earnestly hoped that a few more hours could be spared for this kind of work, so that the boys may have ample time to make their little researches in the field of Literature, supplement their class work and cultivate the habit of extensive reading.

BRIEF NOTES ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN BENGAL

BY

MR. JAMES BUCHANAN

Director of Physical Education, Bengal.

OFFICIAL ORGANISATION.

Director of Physical Education, and Assistant Director of Physical Education, maintained by Government. The latter has control of East Bengal, while the former controls West Bengal and supervises generally. The Young Women's Christian Association is subsidised by Government in return for the services of the Physical Directress, who tours throughout Bengal, and organises Physical Education in Girls' Schools.

In Government colleges and high schools there are nine Madras-trained graduates, 41 full-time drill-masters, and six part-time drill-masters. As each drill-master retires his post is converted to one for a fully trained graduate physical instructor, on a salary scale of Rs. 75—200 per month, which is equivalent to that offered to graduates with the degree of Bachelor of Training.

Graduate instructors are eligible for deputation to the Government Training College to take the B. T. degree, and for promotion to Headmasterships and Inspecting posts.

REGULATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT AND AIDED HIGH SCHOOLS.

Every class must have systematic physical exercise at least two periods weekly during school hours, and games at least once weekly after school hours. Sports fees are compulsory in all schools, and generally amount to Re. 1 per annum.

UNAIDED HIGH SCHOOLS.

The University of Calcutta, which controls these, has not made physical education compulsory but is considering the matter. Five years ago all schools were notified that provision for systematic teaching of physical activities should be introduced, and most schools have adopted this.

SCHOOL MEDICAL INSPECTION.

A complete scheme for Government schools was on the point of being agreed to when the present financial trouble began. The scheme will be initiated as soon as possible. Meantime, in Government and non-Government schools the Public Health Department carries on medical inspection work.

HYGIENE.

This is introduced in the curricula of all high and middle schools.

MIDDLE AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

Of these there are nearly 50,000 in Bengal, and physical activities are, nominally, compulsory at least twice weekly in all. But many class teachers have a limited knowledge of what to teach and neglect the work. Improvement will be gradual as the training of teachers improves.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS.

From 1926 to 1929 over two hundred high school teachers had been trained in courses of six weeks in addition to these Bachelors

of Teaching who had had regular instruction during their B. T. course. In 1929 it was decided to discontinue these short courses as schools were accepting the certificate instead of aiming at the appointment of a graduate with a diploma in physical education.

Till now a diploma could only be gained at Madras, but it is recognised that, since Government stipends can only be given for studies in Bengal, many of the best type of men for physical education were debarred from qualifying themselves owing to lack of money. Government have therefore agreed to the establishment of a residential Training Centre in Physical Education in Calcutta. This centre will open on 1st July 1932 in a house with fairly large grounds for minor games, and conveniently situated as regards playing fields for major games and a tank for swimming. The course will last for one academic year, and only graduates will be admitted. Stipends of Rs. 20 per month will be given.

The training of teachers for middle schools is done in a one year course at Normal Schools, and students have physical exercise twice weekly plus games after study hours twice or thrice weekly. In addition, for teachers with some years of service, five short courses of two weeks duration have been held, and more will be organised in the future.

Teachers for primary schools have a year's training in Guru Training Schools, where physical exercise twice weekly, plus teaching practice, is the rule. One hundred teachers from the staffs of Guru Training Schools have had special training for two weeks, and another fifty will attend a course during the current year. Also, about seventy Sub-Inspectors of schools, controlling about 7000 primary schools, have had special training of two weeks in physical activities for children of 5-10 years of age.

For teachers from Girls' Schools, the Physical Directress of the Young Women's Christian Association, as part of her Government work, holds a course of six weeks every year.

Teachers' manuals.—Since 1916 Dr. Gray's Drill Book has contained the details of physical exercises to be taught in all schools. Two years ago, however, Government decided to supersede Dr. Gray's book by a more extensive set of programmes for schools. The first manual, for physical instructors and others engaged in physical education in high and middle schools will be published within the next few weeks, and one for primary schools is now ready for the press.

Colleges.—The University of Calcutta has not yet agreed to compulsory physical education for students, but has brought the importance of the subject to the notice of college authorities. As a result, every college has a sports club with sports fees, and only two or three out of 42 have not a physical instructor or drill master, a games secretary, a playing field, and a gymnasium.

Government physical education grants.—From 1926 to 1930 Government distributed to colleges through the University Rs. 89,000 for the improvement of facilities for physical education. In 1931 it was found impossible to continue these grants, but it is hoped to resume distribution in 1933.

From 1928 to 1932 high and middle schools received Rs. 1,00,000 in grants for the purchase of games and gymnastic apparatus.

Plans for the future are of a more extensive nature but, although the schemes have been approved, their completion will be dependent on the financial situation.

Independent organisations.—In addition to the Football, Hockey, Cricket, and Athletic clubs affiliated to their various central organisations, there is a very widespread movement in Bengal towards the development of voluntary organisations which promote small area games, gym-

nastics on apparatus, exercise with light apparatus, etc. Already there are over three hundred independent clubs, representing a membership of over 10,000, all over the province. The work of associating these clubs so that mutual assistance may be provided through literature training courses, lectures, discussions, etc., has been taken up recently by the Bengal Physical Education Association, but so far little has been done.

Inter-School Sports Association.—This association has organised annual athletic sports for Calcutta schools for the past twenty years but during the last two years it has gradually extended its scope ,and now controls football, hockey, and swimming competitions. The aim of the association is to develop into an organisation regulating and controlling inter-schools contests of all kinds throughout Bengal, and to organise provincial championship leagues and other competitions. Already six mofussil school associations have been formed, and there is every prospect of a special Government grant to enable the association to develop its work.

Inter-school physical training competitions and demonstrations. In 1931 and 1932 competitions were organised between school teams in prescribed physical training lessons which included free-hand exercises and small area games. Each competition provided the necessary practice for a mass demonstration to show the public what is being done in schools.

In 1932 twenty-two high schools represented by 700 boys, took part in the competition, and sixteen of these (500 boys) gave a demonstration which included mass exercises, indigenous exercises, vaulting, and small area games. The demonstration was attended by the Hon'ble Minister for Education and nearly every local educationist.

Calcutta Corporation.—A visit to the Corporation parks in Calcutta shows the strength of the movement which has been fostered by the Corporation which, during the past few years, has deputed a number of young men for training at Madras. Every park is fully occupied in the evenings by hundreds of boys, all participating in organised activities. The paid playleaders of the corporation receive the assistance of voluntary workers, and all are kept very fully engaged.

Conclusion.—Progress during the last five years has been very rapid. Although, to the casual observer, there is not much to be seen of physical education, this is due to the fact that the work that is going on in colleges, schools, and private clubs is not of a spectacular nature, and the general public have not opportunities of seeing how young men and boys are employed while inside their institutions. The development of large scale demonstrations, and the association of gymnastic clubs under a central organisation will, however, be valuable propaganda.

A Vetern Educationist Retires

Mr. C. S. Ramaswami Iyer, Head Master, Primary Department, The Kellet High School, Triplicane, retired from his long service of forty-three years, on the 30th of June 1932. Mr. Ramaswami Iyer was appointed as a teacher in the year 1889. In 1893 he was made the Superintendent of the Primary department. In 1898 he was one of the Sub-Editors of the "Swadesamitran" for eight months. He was a staunch member of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association. In the same year he published "The Aryan Reformer" a bi-monthly in Tamil, which existed for about three and a half years. Again in 1899 he started the Tamil Zenana Magazine. "Matharmanoranja" a Tamil monthly journal devoted to female education, and continued it till 1915. As the Superintendent of the Primary department he introduced the kindergarten system of teaching the different subjects combined with play and work in the school. He started the Madras Elementary Teachers' Co-operative society in 1918; and in 1923 he requested the Council of the Madras Teachers' Guild to take this up extending its scope to all teachers in the Madras City. In accordance with the request the name of the Madras Elementary Teachers' Co-operative society was changed into Madras Teachers' Guild co-operative society. The late Rev. D. G. M. Leith and Mr. Ramaswami Iyer started a Free Night school in the Parthasarathy Kuppam, Triplicane, in 1913 under the auspices of the Sociological Brotherhood, for the benefit of the fishermen and other working class people in the Triplicane area. As one of the members of the Brotherhood and as its secretary for some years Mr. Ramaswami Iyers' services were invaluable. He has also written a few books which are appreciated by the public. He started a Tamil Sangam in the Kellet High School and was its President till he retired. Mr. Ramaswami Iyer, though old, always took a keen interest in the scout movement and was responsible for starting a Cub pack for his boys in the Primary department.

In the course of a farewell speech the Rev. C. W. Ranson, Principal of the Kellet High School said:—

"Mr. C. S. Ramaswamy Iyer has given long years of unstinted service to the Kellet High School, many generations of boys have passed through his hands and benefited by the healthy influence which he has exerted, and it is with feelings of very deep regret that we say farewell.

He has lived for the Kellet High School and when the history of this institution is written, the name of C. S. Ramaswamy Iyer will play a large and honourable part in that record.

The school is proud of its Grand Old Man and we feel that he has some reason to be proud of the school on which he has left the mark of his strong personality. "

THE LATE RAO SAHEB C. RAMASWAMI IYENGAR

A PRACTICAL EDUCATIONIST

The life of the late Rao Saheb C. Ramaswami Ayyangar from 1905 to 1932 was one long period of struggle for educating the poor along right lines and for giving encouragement for the deserving poor to prosecute their studies. The presence of Swami Vivekananda and subsequently of Swami Ramakrishnanada served to stimulate and direct his longing for the service of humanity. Even in the college he had an unquenchable thirst for starting schools for the depressed classes, moved as he was to a large extent by the astounding illiteracy of the masses. His pioneer attempts to run schools for the depressed classes were clear indications of the boundless enthusiasm he had for the cause of the masses

To found a Home for the poor and educate them has been his first and the last care all these years of his life. With all his innate love for the boys, with his spirit of service and singular and single-minded devotion to duty he was eminently fitted for his life's task. He was also managing The Madras Poor Boys' Fund', the funds for which he collected from the charitably- disposed gentlemen of the locality and helped the poor college students with college fees.

The expansion of the Home demanded all his time and energy and consequently he had to concentrate more on 'Home work' and give up the Poor Boys' Fund. All his students remember even to-day how he used to tell them frequently that eudcation was not mere book-learning that passing examination was not the goal and that true education was something higher and nobler. To him it was nothing but preparation for life in all its aspects and activities. Again and again he would emphasise on cleanliness, disciplined life, thrift and economy, practical ability to do things, and living a true Bramacharya life.

He cared more for the health and morals of the students than for their success at examinations. His idea was to build up a society of upright and practical men who could be successful in life with or without University education. He was naturally dissatisfied with the mere secular education and the idea of starting a Residential School where he could combine secular education while he was studying with religious instruction and manual training came into his mind. He felt that secondary education must prepare boys not only for University education but also for the Industrial walks of

life. At any rate he felt that facilities should be given for those who had an inclination for practical work. It was more so in the case of poor boys whose finance was limited and who should earn their livelihood by pursuing varied occupations in life. He also wanted that a band of teachers should live with the boarders in the Home who would otherwise be left to themselves. The Gurukula Ideal, he believed, would go a long way in shaping the character, the ideas and ideals of the young pupils who would have plenty of opportunities of freely moving with their teachers. The inspiration of Swami Ramakrishnananda and Swami Vivekananda made him feel that religion and spirituality should be made the very basis of education. It was something of a missionary outlook which made him feel that the lofty ideals of life found in our scriptures should be made popular to all the boys of the institution. He was also in advance of his times when he introduced manual training classes for the High School. He subsequently opened the Industrial school with the four-year course of mechanical engineering. He advised many of the students after passing their final examinations and especially those who were not best fitted for University education, but who had a practical bent of mind, to divert their time and energy to technical education.

Since the Home was removed to the new buildings in the Sullivan's Garden Road, he stayed with the boys looking after them as their parent. The following facilities for the students were offered with the view of making their education wholesome and allround:—Daily congregational worship, physical training activities, the religion classes, participation in the house-hold duties of the Home. The dignity of labour which he emphasised on all the inmates of the Home whether rich or poor, the spotless cleanliness with which he wanted them to maintain their surroundings, the remarkable punctuality with which he wanted them to attend to their duties, the love he inspired into the young minds for the service to the poor on the occasion of feeding the poor and on similar other occasions—all these details bear eloquent testimony to the ideals of true education which without any preaching or publicity he attempted to put into practical life in the limited sphere of the Home.

"He was one of the chosen men of the world, and his work and spirit will be inspiration and beacon light to South Indians" says Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar than whom there is no greater authority to pass a verdict on the work of this great man.

EDUCATIONAL NEWS BULLETIN

[Issued under the auspices of the All-India Federation of Teachers' Association by the Association of Editors of Educational Journals, 41, Singarachari Street, Triplicane, Madras.]

No. 7] [July 1932

UNITED PROVINCES.

U.P. Secondary Education Association.—The 11th Conference of the Association will be held at Agra on Oct., 6, 7, and 8. During the last three conferences the Presidents of the Conference selected were from among the Associationists. There is a feeling this year that a distinguished educationist should be asked to deliver the address.

English History Syllabus—High School.—Till last year the period before 1485 was not included in the syllabus. This year (for 1934 examination) early and middle ages also have been added. There is a wide difference of opinion on this matter amongst teachers of the subject. It is rumoured that at the last meeting of the subject committee of the Board of High School and Intermediate Education it was almost decided that in view of the necessity of teaching early development of constitution teachers would in future be instructed to deliver a few informal lectures on the topic and the present course of early and middle ages will be dropped. It would be interesting to know the practice in other provinces.

Cut in schools.—The Secretary, U. P. Secondary Education Association shortly before the Summer Vacation had announced that a deputation of the Association had met the D. P. I. in this connection and hopes had been held out that the cut of 10% in schools would take the form of a cut from the grant-in-aid. This the Association wanted to be done. But it now appears that the original proposal of cutting 10% on the salaries of teachers is being acted upon. It is worth while noting that this does not seem to be so in all provinces.

Salaries.—As the Govt. have reduced the scale of salaries in their schools, the managing committees of privately managed institutions also have followed suit. Salaries in this provinces were reputed to be much better as compared with any other province. Now in the average a B.A., L.T., cannot hope to get more than the start of Rs. 75 with no certainty of a grade. This year much fewer posts were announced to be vacant.

Lucknow and Allahabad Universities.—The problem of having or not an honorary Vice-Chancellor had been engaging attention recently. Even some University teachers have contributed their views to the papers. On the whole they seem to be opposed to the idea of an honorary Vice-Chancellor.

Medical Inspection of schools.—This has been carried out for some time past now in an organised form. Bigger towns have the privilege of whole time officers while smaller places have part-time men. The idea of Childrens' Clinic in bigger towns has not yet materialised perhaps due to financial stringency. In official circles it is being gradually recognised that periodical conferences with teachers will go a long way to improve the present unsatisfactory conditions. Rai Sahab Ramsaran Misra the Inspector of Schools, Bareilly Circle has given a lead in this matter by going

round the centres in his circle and meeting the teachers of schools to discuss the medical inspector's report. This is a commendable practice.

Industrial schools.—It will be regretted by some that due to the need of retrenchment several industrial schools are being closed down, e.g., that at Nagina. People are not wanting who hold that it was a mistake to have spent any amount of public money on such schools for they believe that no good can come out of them unless the indusrial concerns are ready to absorb those who are thus trained. Our students do not find any other opening but service after a formal training for arts and that most of them cannot invest any money in independent ventures towards which the State also does not help them.

A Headmaster involved in Politics.—Mr. Duncan Greenles, M.A., Headmaster of the City Anglo-Vernacular High School, Allahabad is the first headmaster here who is undergoing trial in a political case. He was appointed last year on probation and has not been confirmed.

J. A. S. High School, Khurja.—This is the only school in U. P. which has been making experiments on a large scale. They began with the Dalton Plan. They found the Plan unsuitable in certain respects and consequenty made modifications. Soon after they discovered the need of greater modifications and they took up another experiment. At present they are working on the House System with an element of Dalton Plan. The result of the whole experiment made here is that partly due to the bogey of the Final Examination and partly due to other causes it appears that the experiment may have in the end to be given up, although it must be said to the great credit of the teachers in the school that they do not yet appear to be on the downward course and have not yet given up courage, conviction and enthusiasm with which they began the work.

Recognition of new High Schools.—The number of schools given recognition this year has beaten the record so far. The Board has apparently come round to the view that by giving recognition to more middle schools for the High school examination it would give greater impetus to the spread of education in the province.

BENGAL.

1. Forty-three teachers passed the proficiency test of physical training held at the Physical Training Camp for teachers at Rajshahi in the month of June last organised by the All-Bengal Teachers' Association. Mr. J. Buchanan, Director of Physical Education, Bengal, went personally to Rajshahi and held the test for four days along with three other examiners. He expressed great satisfaction at the work done in the training centre. As the experiment has proved successful, it is hoped the A.B. T.A. will open a few more such training centres.

2. Government of Bengal has also opened on 1st July a physical training centre for teachers: only graduate teachers below twenty-five have been allowed to join. Out of 110 applicants 16 candidates have been selected. The selected students will receive stipends of Rs. 20 per month during the course of training, which will last one academic year.

3. It is understood that as a measure of retrenchment Government will abolish the David Hare Training College for Teachers.

4. The Report of the Special Committee appointed by the Syndicate for suggesting changes in the Matriculation will come up before the Senate for final adoption on July 23. Besides recommending Vernacular as the medium of instruction in all subjects except English, it has made History, Geography and Elementary Science compulsory subjects which were so long in the optional list. Age restriction will also be abolished. The Committee further proposes a Register for qualified teachers. No teacher will be allowed to teach English un-

less he registers his name. The minimum qualification for an English teacher has been either an M.A. degree in English, History, Philosophy and Economics or Honours in those subjects or B.T. degree or the passing of a special examination to be held by the University for this purpose.

BOMBAY.

The Senate of the University of Bombay has been recently taking greater interest in University finance and the passing of the university budget is no longer a formal affair which it used to be. It seems this interest of the Senate will tend to shake off the inertia of the University which has shown almost no progress during the last twelve years. The Syndicate has at present two schemes under consideration; one for the inauguration of a Technological Department, in association with the Royal Institute of Science, and the other for conducting a Department of Psychology and Education, in association with the University Department of Sociology. It is not unlikely that both these projects will be well on their way by June 1933.

Besides passing the annual budget-estimates for next year the Senate in its meeting on 13th and 15th of June, recommended the extension of the affiliation of the Samaldas College, Bhavanagar, in Interscience A and B groups, and provisional affiliation of the Naorosji Wadia college, Poona, as a First Grade college in Arts teaching upto Inter-science A and B groups—in Science. The latter college is a venture of a new society called the Modern Education society, formed in Poona, chiefly through the efforts of the life-members of the Deccan Education society who retired in January last. The college has a qualified staff and it is expected that it will soon be like other colleges in Poona a prosperous institution.

The All-India Shivaji Memorial committee has from this month opened in Poona, a preparatory school, for those who would choose the military career. It is a boarding school, the teachers and the students residing in the same compound. It is too early to speak about the future of this institution. It will however not only supply a much needed want but may also have a salutary effect on the other schools in Poona and Maharashtra.

When the communal riots in Bombay began in May the schools were all closed for the vacation; but the riots have with short intervals of peace, continued for two months now and have had an adverse effect on the primary schools in the city, particularly those in the riot area. Even when the riots stop the attitude of mutual suspicion fostered by stray attacks on innocent persons will survive for some more months and the education of the children will suffer.

During the last three years the City of Bombay has witnessed the rise of half a dozen high schools in the city, of a proprietary or semi-proprietary character. Two or three of these have proved good additions. Owing to the inability of Government to offer grant-in-aid to these institutions, it can have but indifferent control on them and this freedom can be both a curse and a blessing. This is a development which needs anxious watching on the part of the University and the Department.

The secondary training college, Bombay, is perhaps the youngest Training college in India. Started in 1906 it remained outside the influence of the University upto 1922 and was little more than an arrangement for introducing the teachers in the Government High schools in the Presidency, to the elements of training. The staff of the college consisted of the Principal and the Vice-principal only. It admitted 40 students per year mostly teachers from Government schools and granted a Diploma (S. T. C. D.) to those who passed the annual examination of the college. In 1922

the college was affiliated to the University for the B.T. degree, its staff was strengthened and it was allowed to admit 60 students per year of whom not more than 10 were teachers from Government schools. In ten years the college has sent out over 400 B. Ts. but this is extremely inadequate inasmuch as it means it has provided approximately one B.T. for every high school in the Presidency. Last year the college admitted 75 instead of the usual 60; and from this year the accommodation is still further increased to 100. It is thus an institution of decent size now and it is expected that the schools will have hereafter a better supply of trained graduates. It is to be noted however that the presidency of Bombay has still no provision for the training of the undergraduates of whom there are about 5000 working in different schools.

The Indian Women's University held its annual convocation on the 18th of June and although it had this year the biggest number of graduates, the convocation was held under a shadow of misfortune cast by the sudden stoppage, since February last, of the annual grant of Rs. 52,500 from the endowment made by the late Sir Vithaldas Thackersy. The University activities are thereby seriously crippled if not paralysed and it is hoped that the trustees of the endowment will realise the importance of continuing the grant during the period of negotiation between them and the syndicate of the University. The convocation address was this year delivered by Mr. Ramanand Chatterjee, the Editor of "Modern Review," Calcutta.

MADRAS.

1. The S.S.L.C. Board recently invited from heads of secondary schools and from teachers' associations, suggestions for suitable modifications to the revised S.S.L.C. scheme. It is now said that the syndicate of the University of Madras has instructed the Board not to make any modification in the scheme till 1935.

2. It is reported that teachers employed in certain Taluq Boards in Malabar have not been paid their salaries for the past six months. A few days ago, Mr. V. P. Narayanan Nambiar, M.L.C., interviewed the Hon'ble The Minister for Education and in the course of the interview described the great hardship and suffering of the teachers in the employ of the Taluq Board of Kurumbranad in Malabar. The Minister is reported to have promised sympathetic consideration.

3. All schools and colleges have reopened after the summer recess. The prevailing economic depression is acutely felt by managers of several educational institutions. There has been a general fall in the strength ranging from 10% to 25%.

4. As a measure of retrenchment the Government have ordered the temporary abolition of the post of the Deputy Directress of Public Instruction. They have also reduced the number of inspectors by two.

5. The authorities of the National Girls' High School, Mylapore have opened a Montessori class early this month. Miss. Helen Veale, the principal of the school is taking a great interest in the new class and it is reported to be very popular.

THE TEACHERS' BOOKSHELF

A First English Reader for Indian Schools. By Mr. C. H. Strover, B.A., (Oxon.) with a foreword by Mr. H. Martin:—This is a neat reader prepared on modern lines. Each lesson has a definite objective and ideas are suggested through pictures. The conversation at the end of each lesson makes it easy for the boy to speak freely. As pointed out by Mr. Martin in his foreword, the appeal to the eye is really very effective. This book which is published by M. V. Sundaram Bros., is well got-up and the price is only five annas.

Tamil First Reader (Kalvikaddal series). This neat little reader is written by Mr. M. Venkatarama Sastri, M.A., L.T. He has brought his experience as a teacher for several years to bear upon the preparation of this reader. A number of small pictures of common objects are given and the words are arranged in a natural manner so as to make it easy for the children to pick them up. This also is published by M. V. Sundaram & Co., and the price is only two annas and a half.

REVIEWS.

The Mysore Secondary Educational League Journal:—We have great pleasure in welcoming the organ of the Mysore secondary educational league. The volume I before us contains interesting articles among which may be mentioned (1) Experiment and Education, and (2) Question method and narration. We should make special mention of the enquiry of the reaction of high school students to high school subjects, undertaken by Mr. K. Srinivasacharlu of Mysore. The enquiry seems to have proceeded in the following manner. A list of nineteen subjects in the Mysore S. S. L. C. curriculum was prepared and students were asked to give reason for their likes and dislikes. It is found that pupils show remarkable indifference to their optional subjects.

The Pachaiyappa Review. We are glad to receive the New year number of the Pachiyappa Review. This contains a number of contributions from the students. The story of the foolish Nawab is short and interesting. The topic on Health containing practical hints will be appreciated by students in general. We heartily congratulate the editorial Board on the neat appearance of the Review.

THE S. I. T. U. PROTECTION FUND

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the members of the Fund that the Board has recently resolved that the names of such of those members who have been in arrears for more than three months be removed from the Register of members, according to Rule 14 (e), after giving them registered notices.

The defaulters whose names have to be so removed are eligible for re-admission, if such a member applies within a further period of *three months* to be reinstated as a member of the Fund and pays reinstatement fee of Re. 1, and the arrears of subscription and annual contribution together with all the calls and fines, due for the period up to the date of readmission.

R. RAMAKRISHNAN,
Hon. Secretary.

Errata:—Obituary Notice on page 304 in the June issue of this Journal. Read Rs. 45 instead of Rs. 31, and Rs. 404-8-0 instead of Rs. 401-8-0.

S. I. T. U. PROTECTION FUND

LIST OF MEMBERS (*Continued.*)

866 Mr. V. Kanakasabapathi Pillai, Asst. Board Boys School, Gujjanur.
867 „ V. Venkatarama Sastri, Asst. Board High School, Tanuku (W. Godavari).
868 „ G. Sundaram, Asst. Sir S. I. High School, Tirukatupalli.
869 „ M. .V. Swaminathan, Asst. Sir S. I. High School, Tirukattupalli.
870 „ K. Subramania Iyer, Asst. Sir S. I. High School, Tirukatupalli.
871 „ S. R. Pasupathi Iyer, Asst. Municipal Town Elementary School, Karur.
872 „ N. S. Narasimha Iyengar, Asst. E. R. High School, Trichinopoly.
873 „ S. S. Subramanyam Iyah, Asst. E. R. High School, Trichinopoly.
874 „ A. K. Sitaraman, Asst. P. S. High School, Madras.
875 „ D. Sitaramadoss, Asst. Board High School, Kandukur (Nellore).
876 „ S. Raghunathan, Asst. Board High School, Kandukur (Nellore).
877 „ K. Vathamuthu, Asst. Municipal Elementary School, Kottamadu (Karur).
878 „ P. S. Gopalakrishna Aiyar, Asst. Municipal Elementary School, Karur.
879 „ A. S. Venkateswara Sastri, Pandit, Municipal High School, Tiruppur.
880 „ K. S. Ramaratnam Aiyar, Asst. Municipal High School, Tiruppur.
881 „ V. Krishnamurthi Iyer, Asst. Municipal High School, Tiruvannamalai.
882 „ D. Ratna Thevar, Headmaster, Board Girls School, Piranmalai (Ramnad).
883 „ P. S. Kumaraswami Iyer, Asst. Municipal High School, Gudiyattam (N. Arcot).
884 „ K. R. Lakshmanan, Asst. Municipal High School, Gudiyattam (N. Arcot).
885 „ T. S. Anantanarayanan, Asst. Board High School, Lalgudi.
886 „ T. B. Rangaswami Naidu, Headmaster, Board Elementary Boys School, Pallipalayam (Coimbatore Dt.).
887 „ T. K. Sundaresa Iyer, Asst. Municipal High School, Tiruvannamalai.
888 „ P. N. Swaminatha Aiyar, Asst. Municipal High School, Tiruvannamalai.
889 „ M. S. Sampangirama Iyer, Asst. Board High School, Dharmapuri.
890 „ K. R Ramalingam, Asst. Board High School, Satyamangalam (Coimbatore Dt.).
891 „ D. James Rajendran, Asst. Municipal High School, Karur.
892 „ K. P. Govindaswami, Asst. Board High School, Erode.
893 „ N. Sundaresan, Asst, Board High School, Dharmapuri.
894 „ S. P. Natarajan, Asst. Railway Indian Higher Elementary School, Golden Rock.
895 „ S. Ramachandra Rao, Asst. Municipal High School, Ootacamund.
896 „ S. N. Ramachandra Iyer, Asst. Board High School, Panruti.
897 „ R. Venkatachariar, Asst. National High School, Negapatam.
898 „ S. Venkateswarlu, Headmaster, Board Higher Elementary School, Nosam (Kurnool Dt.).
899 „ K. S. Kuppuswami Iyer, Asst. Board Higher Elementary School, Kannamanmangalam (N. Arcot Dt.).
901 „ K. R. Ponnappa Aiyar, Asst. V. M. High School, Bodinayakanur.
902 „ R. Daniel Ponnaiya Rao, Carpentry Instructor, L. M. C. High School, Shiyali.
903 „ D. Rajareegam Pillai, Asst. L. M. C. High School, Shiyali.
904 „ J. Ganasundaram, Asst. L. M. C. High School, Shiyali.
905 „ S. K. Ramaswami Aiyar, Asst. Municipal High School, Coimbatore
906 „ G. Srinivasa Iyengar, Asst. Hindu Secondary School, Velur (Salem Dt.).
907 „ V. Aswathanarayana Iyer, Asst. E. R. High School, Trichinopoly.
908 „ A. Venkatacharlu, Asst. Christian College School, Madras.
909 „ S. Guruswami Aiyar, Asst. Ry. Indian Higher Elementary School, Golden Rock.
910 „ P. R. Chidambara Aiyar, Asst. Municipal High School, Ootacamund.
911 „ John Ramaswami, Asst. Municipal High School, Ootacamund.
912 „ P. S. Balasubramanian, Headmaster, Board Elementary School, Krishnagiri.

THE UNION LETTER

Comrades,

You know that this academic year we are going to celebrate the silver jubilee of the S. I. T. U. along with the annual conference to be held at Trichy. It is my desire to present a connected account of the working of this Provincial Organisation from its inception in 1928 upto May 1933. I have been searching the archives of the office and I am sorry to confess I have very little material regarding the history of the S. I. T. U. for the *first few years* of its life. We have fairly reliable material from 1918 onwards only.

May I appeal to you all especially to the senior members of our profession, to those who were young 25 years ago and bore the brunt of the S.I.T.U. work to lend us (if they cannot present to us) whatever record they may have which would help us in reconstructing the history of the period 1908—1918? Reports of Provincial Educational Conferences, Annual Reports of the S.I.T.U. old copies of the S. I. T U. Journal which was published as supplement to the Education Review, anything in fact that would be of use to us, is welcome.

I fully hope that my appeal would find a good response.

Fraternally yours,

S. K. Yegnanarayana Aiyar.

President of the S. I. T. U.

P.S.—Remember the Jubilee Fund! ! Contribute your mite, however humble.

EDITORIAL

Should we refuse:

We understand that letters are being frequently received from teachers in elementary schools, requesting that they should be enrolled as individual members of the S. I. T. U. They are anxious to make themselves eligible for admission into the Protection Fund. These teachers are scattered throughout the presidency and many of them happen to be employed in districts where District Teachers' guilds are not in existence. Membership of the Union is no doubt thrown open to all grades of teachers but any one will readily admit that teachers can be enrolled as "individual members" of the Union only under exceptional circumstances. A provincial organisation like our union cannot help adhering to the wholesome principle of federation. It has been its policy all these years to encourage the promotion of guilds and associations in different localities so as to make it possible for any teacher in the distant moffusil area to join the organisation and enjoy the privileges of membership. The union has to function through its affiliated associations and it will be against the interest of the organisation if it should admit teachers as members without consulting the guild. The loyalty of the guilds to the union can hardly be expected to be genuine and spontaneous if teachers be enrolled as individual members without their knowledge. We would therefore appeal to the teachers concerned to approach the district guild or local association. Membership in any affiliated association enables them to enjoy all the privileges of the membership of the union. We have to bring to the notice of our guilds one point which is referred to in some of the letters. The rules of some guilds do not provide for the admission of teachers in elementary schools and hence these are put to considerable inconvenience. The district guilds will,

we feel sure, be willing to have their rules modified if the teachers in the locality should send a representation to them. If there be no guild in the locality or if, for any reason, the revision of rules be found impossible, it is open to these teachers to form an association of their own in each centre and get it affiliated to the union. Much is expected of teachers in elementary schools in the coming years and the teaching profession cannot refuse to extend the hand of fellowship to an important and strong group of teachers. A well-organised profession makes no distinction between teacher and teacher and the union will be promoting the *morale* of the profession if it should actively seek to bring within its influence our brethren in elementary schools.

English in Secondary Schools

(a) All of us are anxious about the present state of secondary education and eager to think out ways of increasing its efficiency. While we realise that we must more securely base it on an improved system of Elementary Education, we know that we must industriously repair the machine and also reform and change the contents of the school-course. In this connection, the problem of the teaching of English is of great importance. This point is made clear by the distinguished teacher who writes the first article in this issue on the "The teaching of English"; and certainly we cannot put the essence of the problem better than he does: "to picture to oneself the ideally right place of English in the Secondary school, to provide against its sudden disappearance from the system (English used to be, still in too many cases is, the sun of the secondary school system), to avert this danger by giving the mother-tongue exactly the same prominence and attention that English gets in England, and using English as a source of knowledge and power for the modernisation and invigoration of the mother-tongue, to recognise that the ability to read and assimilate modern English books as the indispensable complement of the mastery of the mother-tongue and further, to impart the power to appreciate and assimilate not only the matter but the form of good, simple, modern English prose, and as a means to this end (as well as for utilitarian purposes) to train the pupil to speak simple and fundamental English correctly and without effort, and to write simple English on familiar subject-matter with special attention to clearness and sequence of thought and right choice of words. These are, we may say, the only proper aims of a High school or even college course in our country. We must first get this point accepted by our school authorities and teachers."

Our next task is to bring about the correlation of the teaching of English to the teaching of the mother-tongue. The writer, already quoted, puts this admirably. "Good elocution, ready speech, accurate and fitting expression, both oral and written, the 'ability to derive from books a full measure of what they have to give of information, and enjoyment', and above all, clear thinking—all this is the business of the teacher of the mother-tongue more than anyone else. All the fundamental distinctions of Grammar and 'rhetoric' required for the purposes of reading and composition by the teacher of English should reach the pupil by a path paved by the teacher of the mother-tongue on this new basis, and developing its resources as the primary instrument of language-training and mind-training in general'.

These are the first principles of reform. Next we ought to find new ways of instruction; there is room for new plans, like Mr. R. M. Savur's or the Rev. W. M. Ryburn's as set forth in this journal. In particular, we have to find a way of giving the pupil a more active part in learning the language, which is the object of Mr. Savur's plan, while the teacher has ever to be ready to teach some new skill or some tone of music for the mind.

His need for cultivating himself at every point is obvious and conferences of language teachers and vacation classes for different grades of teachers must be arranged by the Educational Department or the Teachers' Guilds. Above all, the teachers' faith in the teaching of a language and its literature —as revealed in the aricle in this issue on 'The Appreciation of Poetry'—should be thought vital; that is the only instrument of progress.

'Schools should be at liberty to experiment, to pay attention to quality rather than to pass pupils through the mill drearily, having to finish a prescribed course of texts and grammar. To give up texts for examination at the S. S. L. C. or even at the intermediate stage in the University will be a move in the right direction, if the English teachers are trained specialists entrusted with the sole duty of teaching their subject, and of introducing a special setting to it in the school course.

Most men among us spend our best years in learning one foreign language and some learn to use it with a singular ability; but in the nature of things, we cannot write or speak absolutely correctly and meanwhile the practice of English in our schools deteriorates, and so much prominence being given to it, other things are not attended to. Only a wise and revolutionary change in our conception of the purpose of teaching English will now do, else this wrong teaching of English will go on poisoning the whole system of secondary and collegiate education. And we may also plead for a wide liberty of planning in the new teaching of English.

(b) The current number of our Journal deals with the vexed question of "English in our secondary schools". This has been approached from different standpoints by our contributors. Our readers will be glad to note the interest which the senior officers of the department of Education in the different provinces have been taking in the special study of the problem of secondary education undertaken by the union. We should invite the attention of our readers particularly to the article by a member of the Indian Educational Service. The distinguished writer has brought his varied experience to bear upon the study of this question and one can hardly fail to be impressed with the sympathetic imagination permeating the whole article. He has rightly pointed out that the question of English cannot be treated independently by itself and that a clear understanding of the goal and aim of secondary education should precede the consideration of the place of English in the curriculum. His observations regarding the mother-tongue, the soundness of which cannot be questioned on pedagogic grounds, will make teachers furiously to think. We have no doubt that every teacher will put a question to himself as he reads the article. He will realise that he can have no regard either to the ideals of the teaching profession or to the real interest of the pupil so long as he chooses to justify the present wasteful method on grounds of "so-called practical considerations". It is time that the teacher should judge the question on its merits. He should not hesitate to effect a radical reform. Teachers cannot now complain if the public should find them guilty of continuing to work a wasteful system silently. In the class room we shut our eyes to the defects of the system and take a delight in producing *hot house* plants but we take care to reserve educational ideas and ideals to spectacular occasions such as conferences. This double game does no good to any party. It should not be for us merely to move with the current. It will be a poor compliment to the teaching profession in South India if out of five hundred and odd secondary schools we cannot find at least a dozen schools prepared to do the right thing at the right moment.

THE TEACHER'S EQUIPMENT.

The teacher in the higher forms of a secondary school is apt to consider himself more as a specialist in one subject and he may not appreciate the need for an acquaintance with subjects of general interest. It is not easy for such a teacher to make his teaching effective. All of a sudden a situation may arise in the classroom and a teacher who has no resources may feel perplexed in explaining, say a passage in the English text. Think of a teacher who is doing a lesson in cricket. How uninteresting and pointless will it be if the teacher should happen to be altogether ignorant of the nature of the game. A versatile teacher is sure to make a mark and it should be the object of every teacher to keep his eyes open and to be up-to-date. The observations of Dr. J. C. Johnson, Teachers' College, Pennsylvania should be of interest to our readers. While dealing with the importance of a knowledge of biology on the part of a teacher, he observes as follows:—"To the teacher of the common school branches and of special subjects other than biology, parts of this chapter (epochs in History of Biology) may seem to contribute little of value to understanding or solving the problems of the school room. To a degree this is true, except that every teacher should know the outstanding men and epochs in all branches of learning. *If the teacher* (the italics are ours) *cannot name a few great musicians and tell what they composed, if he knows none of the great artists and sculptors, if he knows none of the great men of letters, if he knows none of the great religious leaders, he certainly does not have the broad background of information and interpretation that every teacher should have*". While emphasizing the value of these remarks, we should appeal to the managing bodies to allot a decent amount every year for the acquisition of books on modern topics to the school library. The school library should not be expected to grow rich with *specimen copies* of text books. Twentieth century is the age of books for one and all and to cripple the library is to starve intellectually the teacher as well as the pupil. In the majority of our schools the library is not worth mentioning and instruction in the class room has necessarily to be carried on in the old, traditional, primitive methods. *Is this not a waste?*